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**THE GOSPEL OF JOHN IN  
SOCIOLINGUISTIC PERSPECTIVE**

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# HIGH GRID

## WEAK GROUP/HIGH GRID

Purity: pragmatic attitude toward purity; pollution is not automatic; bodily exuviae are not threatening and may be recycled.  
Rite: used for private as well as public ends when present; the individual remains superior to the rite process; condensed symbols do not delimit reality.  
Personal Identity: individualism; pragmatic and adaptable.  
Body: viewed instrumentally, as means to some end; self controlled; treated pragmatically.  
Sin: basically caused by ignorance or failure; hence viewed as stupidity or embarrassment with loss of face; the individual is responsible.  
Cosmology: the universe is geared to individual success and initiative; the cosmos is benignly amoral; God is a sort of junior partner; adequate causality.  
Suffering and Misfortune: an intelligent person ought to be able to avoid them; totally eliminable.

## STRONG GROUP/HIGH GRID

Purity: strong concern for purity; well-defined purification rites; purity rules define and maintain social structures.  
Rite: a society of fixed rites; rites express the internal classification system of the group; rite symbols perdure in all contexts of life; permanent sacred places.  
Personal Identity: a matter of internalizing clearly articulated social roles; individual is subservient to, but not in conflict with, society; dyadic personality.  
Body: tightly controlled but a symbol of life.  
Sin: the violation of formal rules; focus is upon behavior rather than on internal states of being; rites are efficacious in counteracting sin; individual is responsible for deviance.  
Cosmology: anthropomorphic; non-dualistic; the universe is just and reasonable; personal causality; limited good.  
Suffering and Misfortune: the result of automatic punishment for the violation of formal rules; part of a "divine" economy; can be alleviated, but not eliminated.

## WEAK GROUP

### WEAK GROUP/LOW GRID

Purity: anti the purity postures of the quadrant from which it emerged.  
Rite: anti the rites of the quadrant from which it emerged; effervescent, spontaneity valued.  
Personal Identity: no antagonism between society and the self; but the old society of the quadrant from which it derived is seen as oppressive; roles of previous quadrant are rejected; self control and/or social control are low; highly individualistic.  
Body: irrelevant; life is spiritual; purity concerns are absent, but they may be rejected; body may be used freely or renunciation may prevail.  
Sin: a matter of personal ethics and interiority.  
Cosmology: the cosmos is likely to be impersonal; there is individual and direct access to the divinity, usually without mediation; cosmos is benign.  
Suffering and Misfortune: love conquers all, love can eliminate it.

## STRONG GROUP

### STRONG GROUP/LOW GRID

Purity: strong concern for purity but the inside of the social and physical body is under attack; pollution present but purification rites are ineffective.  
Rite: a society of fixed rites; rite is focused upon group boundaries, with great concern to expel pollutants (deviants) from the social body; fluid sacred places.  
Personal Identity: located in group membership, not in the internalization of roles, which are confused; distinction between appearance and internal states; dyadic personality.  
Body: social and physical bodies are tightly controlled but under attack; invaders break through bodily boundaries; not a symbol of life.  
Sin: a matter of pollution; evil is lodged within the individual and society; sin is much like a disease deriving from social structure; internal states of being are more important than adherence to formal rules, but the latter are still valued.  
Cosmology: anthropomorphic; dualistic; warring forces of good and evil; the universe is not just and may be whimsical; personal causality; limited good.  
Suffering and Misfortune: unjust; not automatic punishment; attributed to malevolent forces; may be alleviated, but not eliminated.

# LOW GRID

GRID: refers to the degree of assent normally given to the symbol system - the classifications, patterns of perception and evaluation - through which the society enables its members to bring order and intelligibility to their experiences.  
High Grid: indicates a high degree of fit or match between the individual's experiences and societal patterns of perception and evaluation. The individual will perceive the world as coherent, consistent and entirely understandable in its broadest reaches. Values consist of distinct sets of priorities.  
Low Grid: indicates a low degree of fit or match between an individual's experiences and societal patterns of perception and evaluation. The world is largely incomprehensible. Values are scattered in various configurations, hence consist of desiderata.

GROUP: refers to the degree of societal pressure to work on a given social unit (individual or group) to conform to societal norms.  
Strong Group: indicates high pressure to conform along with strong corporate identity, clear distinction between ingroup and outgroup, clear sets of boundaries separating the two, and a clear set of normative symbols defining, expressing and replicating group identity.  
Weak Group: indicates low pressure to conform along with rather nebulous group identity (individualism), fuzzy distinctions between ingroup and outgroup, highly porous sets of boundaries between interfacing groups, and few or too many non-normative symbols defining, expressing and replicating group identity.

Figure 1. Grid and Group Matrix of Mary Douglas.



# THE GOSPEL OF JOHN IN SOCIOLINGUISTIC PERSPECTIVE

by Bruce Malina

It is a truism in New Testament studies that the Gospel of John (= Jn) is different from the other gospel documents in the Christian canon. Jn has been quite appropriately labelled "the maverick gospel" (Kysar 1976). Yet the quality of Jn's uniqueness has yet to be articulated in some way beyond simple intuition of tortuous and impressionistic excursions into the style and "theology." If it is true that the meanings encoded in a text<sup>1</sup> derive ultimately from a social system (see Douglas 1971), it might be useful to look into the social system revealed in and presupposed by Jn to generate insight into the distinctive features of this text (see Malina 1982; 1983). And if it is true that language is essentially a form of social interaction, and that people "language" each other in order to mean, then it might be equally useful to consider the type of language in Jn within the framework of sociolinguistics (see Fishman 1971; Fowler 1977; Halliday 1978; Hudson 1980). From a sociolinguistic standpoint, what persons talk about is meaningful to their conversation partners not so much because these partners do not know what a speaker (or writer) is going to say, but because the partners do know. Any listener or reader has abundant evidence of what some speaker or writer is going to say from both his/her knowledge of how the language works and from practiced sensibility to what one in fact can say in specific situations. For example, an American church-goer is generally rather certain that the Sunday sermon will not be about the Victorian novel or recent economic theories about Third World import quotas, or the proper chemical formulas for describing the structure of crystals. Players talking in a huddle during a football game will not be conversing about permanent life insurance, Zen Buddhism, or the stock market. And persons at the site of an auto accident witnessing a physician speaking with an injured person can be fairly certain they are not speaking about Chinese cooking, the price of eggs, the problems of adolescence, farming in the sub-Sahara or the crime rate in Calcutta. As a rule, members of various social groups can predict the types of meanings that might be exchanged from the situations in which the speaking takes place.

For interpreters of ancient historical texts, what is of interest, of course, is the converse of that observation. Given sufficient pieces of conversation (i.e. text), can one form an idea of the types of situations befitting a given communication and the range of meanings generally exchanged in such situations? Contemporaries do in fact infer the situation from meanings imparted in language. Every time a person observes "you must have read that in newspaper X (or magazine Y, or novel Z, or heard that on TV show A)," s/he is inferring a situation in which only a limited range of meanings can be imparted. Given the information communicated in Jn, can one infer the type of situation in which that sort of information could have been imparted? To answer this question, what is necessary is a comparative set of social locations along with some device for situating a text such as Jn in a given location with some relative degree of adequacy and accuracy. The next step is to situate Jn within the appropriate social location, and then take note of the applicable generalizations that might be forthcoming.<sup>2</sup>

What I should like to offer for discussion here, then, is such a comparative set of social locations along with two devices for situating Jn (and other New Testament texts) within that model: the type of story Jn

tells and the type of language Jn uses in telling his story (on such models and their use for understanding antiquity, see Carney 1975). For the comparative set of social locations, I use Mary Douglas's grid and group model (Douglas 1973; 1978; Douglas and Isherwood 1979), with appropriate modifications. The two devices for situating the text called Jn into the social location model are Hayden White's model of metahistory (White 1973; see History and Theory Beiheft 19, 1980, for a set of essays on the model) and Michael A. K. Halliday's sociolinguistic (Halliday 1978; for its historical moorings, see Monaghan 1979).

### 1. Social Locations; Douglas's Grid and Group

Douglas's grid and group model is rather simple in that it deals with two variables (see figure 1). The first of these is the degree to which a person is embedded in other persons, and this feature is called group. The second is the degree to which persons find their commonly shared values to match their experiences, and this feature is called grid. The group can be stronger or weaker depending on the extent of personal imbeddedness, running from total, strong group, to individualistic weak group. Similarly, a high match of values and experience is high grid, while a low match on the same scale is low grid. A matrix consisting of a horizontal group line crossing a vertical grid line yields a set of quadrants. Figure 1 comes outfitted with the salient features of each quadrant. Since the purpose of this essay is not to explain Douglas's grid and group model, suffice it to say that it is intended to be a polythetic typology (Bailey 1973) in that all features listed need not be present for an appropriate and adequate fit. Further explanation of the salient features of each quadrant can be found in Douglas 1973; 1978; Isenberg and Owen 1977, with applications to early Christianity in Malina 1978; 1981. With a view to interpreting the text called Jn, it seems more useful here to develop a more fitting model for this purpose by superimposing White's model of historical explanation over the Douglas model (see figure 2). What needs explanation now is White's classification of historians and their stories in the resulting comparative perspective.

### 2. White's Metahistorical Model

To begin with, White (1973: 1-42) notes that every story teller, whether professional historian or not, must necessarily adjust the "historical field" in the following five ways.

The historian, first of all, must arrange elements of the historical field in some sort of sequence of occurrences. This sequence of occurrences is the "temporal" order culturally acceptable to story-teller and audience alike.

Then the historian must transform this sequence, or "chronicle" of events into a meaningful flow of action with a beginning, middle and end. Thus the historians must choose from the chronicle: beginning elements, concluding elements and transition elements -- omitting much in between. This choosing from the chronicle is a procedure involving constrained selection, exclusion, emphasis and de-emphasis. These constraints are imposed upon the historians by the type of story s/he wishes to tell. The type of story is plot and plot derives from modes of plotting, modes of emplotment.

Emplotment refers to the direction given to the flow of events in a

story. It answers such "story" questions as: what happened next? How did it happen? Why this way rather than that? How did it come out in the end? These questions are answered, usually implicitly, as the historian tells his story from equilibrium to equilibrium through disequilibrium. White suggests that there are only four modes of emplotment: comedy, tragedy, satire, romance (these are defined at the bottom of figure 2). On the grid and group axes, comedy covers high grid, tragedy low grid; and satire says the same as strong group, while romance looks to weak group. Historians, then, tell stories that are either romantic comedies or romantic tragedies, satiric comedies or satiric tragedies. As far as our New Testament sources are concerned, I see John as a romantic tragedy, while the Synoptics are satiric tragedies. Now as the plot line unfolds, White tells us that historians inevitably inform their audiences or readerships about the point of it all, and this he calls the mode of formal argument.

The mode of formal argument indicates how historical explanations fit into some broader frame, thus yielding the culturally acceptable "point of it all." Of course, this broader frame is the set of values and structures that make up the social system of the historian and his/her audience. By telling stories making the same "point of it all," historians help their societies maintain current social postures and affirm their way of life. White follows Pepper (Pepper 1942; 1945; and most clearly for historical study, 1967: 319-377) and his well-known four modes of formal argument: formist, contextualist, organicist and mechanist. Consider each briefly:

(a) Formist: explanation here consists in properly identifying objects, their class, general qualities, specific attributes, while assigning and labelling them to point up particularity and uniqueness. This mode of argument is weak group/low grid because of its focus on (generalized) individuals and particular unique features (this is weak group), while rejecting any sorts of laws or principles because of a lack of close phasing between universal values and individual experience (this is low grid).

(b) Contextualist: events are placed within the context of their occurrence to point up the interrelationships involved, demonstrating how they work together to produce the effects that they do. This mode of argument is weak group/high grid because of its focus on individual events with the purpose of determining the pragmatic effects of events and what causes them (this is weak group), while assuming there is a continuity between events and their contexts in some recurring relationship (this is high grid). The production of trends, tendencies and general profiles derivable from ascertainable regularities points to high grid confidence (this paper belongs in this quadrant).

(c) Organicist: explanation here consists in putting facts within some integral whole picture consisting of rather abstract principles or recurring ideas that control history in its inexorable progression to its goal(s). This mode of argument is strong group/high grid because individuals (whether persons, events, objects or whatever) are subservient to larger historical processes, hence simply components and replications of the total group which is itself a piece of some cosmic process (this is the strong group aspect). Further, history demonstrates how the purposive laws governing the inevitable historical process (Truth) are always verifiable in contemporary human experience (this is the high grid aspect).

MODE OF EMPLOTMENT: why did things happen this way rather than that? How did it all come out in the end?

MODE OF FORMAL ARGUMENT: what is the point of it all?

MODE OF IDEOLOGICAL IMPLICATION: what should we do about it?

### COMEDY (High Grid)

#### WEAK GROUP/HIGH GRID

MODE OF EMPLOTMENT = Romantic Comedy: the hero (individualistic) successfully struggles against opposing psychological, physical, or social constraints revealing the ultimate reconcilability of opposing elements in human life.

MODE OF FORMAL ARGUMENT = Contextualist: the meaning of events is to be sought in the functions of interrelated elements (efficient cause) in a specific context. There is a functional relationship among location, agent, act, object, agency and purpose; but since the moving force (efficient cause) in an event is the agent revealed in acts produced by means of agencies, grounding individual events in their immediate, open-ended context (with no concern for first, final or detailed material causes).

MODE OF IDEOLOGICAL IMPLICATION = Liberal: fine tune society for maximum efficiency (convolution).

The best of times is in the remote future.

#### ROMANCE (Weak Group)

#### WEAK GROUP/LOW GRID

MODE OF EMPLOTMENT = Romantic Tragedy: the hero (individualistic) struggles unsuccessfully against opposing psychological, physical or social constraints, yet the struggle reveals how success can be found beyond the constraints or by acquiescing to them.

MODE OF FORMAL ARGUMENT = Formist: the meaning of events is to be sought in the unique qualities of agents, acts and agencies described impressionistically by identifying unique and particular class, assigning distinctive attributes and applying labels attesting to particularity.

MODE OF IDEOLOGICAL IMPLICATION = Anarchist: destroy society in favor of fundamental, universal humanity (devolution).

The best of times is in the remote past that is immediately recoverable.

#### STRONG GROUP/HIGH GRID

MODE OF EMPLOTMENT = Satiric Comedy: the hero's (dyadic personality or group) interaction pitted against psychological, physical and/or social constraints result in positive outcomes demonstrating that the acceptance of such constraints leads to harmony, unity, reconciliation, life.

MODE OF FORMAL ARGUMENT = Organicist: the meaning of events consists in how they reveal and fulfill in their own way the goal or purpose of the whole human social process which inevitably and ineluctably unfolds toward its complexified terminus, like a great, evolving, self-transforming biological organism. Events thus put forward the great purposive "laws" controlling the historical process.

MODE OF IDEOLOGICAL IMPLICATION = Conservative: allow society to change of its own internal forces and natural rhythms (evolution).

The best of times is the present.

#### SATIRE (Strong Group)

#### STRONG GROUP/LOW GRID

MODE OF EMPLOTMENT = Satiric Tragedy: the hero's (dyadic personality or group) interactions pitted against psychological, physical and/or social constraints result in negative outcomes demonstrating that one cannot overcome one's situation of embeddedness in its manifold dimensions; one can learn how to accept the situation or one can seek and perhaps find a solution lying beyond normal human limits.

MODE OF FORMAL ARGUMENT = Mechanistic: the meaning of events is to be sought in the latent, implicit, sub- or suprasurface (hence extrahistorical) agencies that control the acts of agents. These agencies are to be found in the scene of location: the physical and/or social environment that is governed by agencies, following predictable "laws" that in fact constrain agents and their acts; discovering and articulating those "laws" and uncovering those agencies are of primary concern.

MODE OF IDEOLOGICAL IMPLICATION = Radical: restructure society in its entirety (revolution).

The best of times is imminent, right around the corner.

### TRAGEDY (Low Grid)

#### GROUP DIMENSION:

Romance: the hero, with an individualistic sense of self, moves beyond, transcends, overcomes, frees him/herself from the varied constraints of the world of experience, of the group(s) in which he/she was part.  
Satire: the hero, most often a dyadic personality, finds him/herself necessarily confined, constrained and fettered by the world of experience, by the social group, and ultimately cannot overcome or should not overcome these constraints.

#### GRID DIMENSION:

Comedy: interaction among seemingly unalterably opposed elements in the physical/social world of men (comedic conflict) results in positive outcomes, indicating a world of ultimate reconciliation, harmony and unity.  
Tragedy: interaction among opposed elements in the physical/social world of men proves that the oppositions are quite real, deep-seated and unalterable - hence one must accept them or look beyond them.

Figure 2. Implications of Story Telling (History)

(d) Mechanist: explanation here consists in placing facts within some larger picture which itself does not explain everything. It is simply a larger total picture, part of some unknown and unknowable whole. The immediate larger picture does, in fact, explain pivotal regularities by seeking out recurrent causes which determine the outcomes discernible in the historical field. This mode of argument is strong group/low grid because the individual is necessarily controlled by forces above and beyond him/her, lying at the unknown and unknowable periphery of the larger picture (this is the strong group aspect: the prescribed individual), indicating that human beings alone cannot attain the goals they set for themselves (this is the low grid aspect).

White goes on to explain what he calls "the mode of ideological implication," that implicit dimension of a story that tells the reader or hearer what s/he ought to do about it now that s/he has heard/read the story. These, briefly, are the anarchist (destroy the present), the liberal (fine tune the present, while looking to a long term future), conservative (maintain the present at all costs as it grinds on inexorably to some certain and secure future), and radical (now, soon, society must be restructured on a new basis, hence focus on some immediate future). The accompanying chart indicates where these fit in the grid and group matrix. While these modes of ideological implication are interesting, it would seem more useful for our purposes to focus on mode of formal argument, since it seems that category is the easiest to discern for purposes of comparative generalization.

The modes of formal argument: formist, contextualist, organicist and mechanist might profitably be considered in terms of the following categories of semantic analysis (White here uses Kenneth Burke 1969: 3-20): location, agent, act, object, agency, purpose, outcome. Again, briefly:

- location refers to the scene, physical, social and cultural, the when/where of the story;
- agent refers to the animate instigator of the action, the who;
- act refers to the action, state or change of the state being described, the what is going on;
- object refers to the focus of the act, the whom or what; if the object is animate it is the "patient," if inanimate, it is simply "object;"
- agency refers to the means by which action takes place, the how;
- purpose refers to the goals of the agents in the story, the why;
- outcome refers to the unintended consequences, goals achieved beyond, beside, against the intentions of the agents, the "but."

Here, I should like to ask the question, with White: which of these categories of semantic analysis are emphasized in the respective modes of formal argument? The following seems to be the case:

(a) Formist argument focuses upon unique agents (who), their unique acts (what is going on) and the unique way in which they realize their goals (agencies, how). With emphasis on the unique, there is no concern for regularities, recurrences, no noting of similarities. This is, of course, the weak group/low grid quadrant location. This is where I would put the gospel of Jn. My reasons for doing so will be presented below. Further, any psychological telling of the story of Jesus by modern authors usually begins here as well.

	FORMIST WG/LG	CONTEXTUALIST WG/HG	ORGANICIST SG/HG	MECHANIST SG/LG
1. Location (where/when) = scene, physical and social		X	illusory insignificant	basic
2. Agent (who) = animate instigator	X			
3. Act (what) = action, state, change of state	X	X		X
4. Object (what/whom) = focus of act (a) personal = patient (b) impersonal = object				
5. Agency (how) = by what means	X	X		extrasocietal forces
6. Purpose (why) = agent's goal(s)			principles	
7. Outcome ("but") = latent effect(s)		X		
	Focus on the unique: hence no regularities or note of sim- ilarities.	Acts and agencies explain; focus on individual event and effects of acts and agencies in relationship to some context.	Focus on princip- les, ideas, cosmic laws, similarities, system.	Focus on how situation and extrasocietal forces control individuals and groups.

Figure 3. Semantic Analysis



(b) Contextualist argument focuses upon the relationship between act (what is going on) and agency (how does it happen) within a given context (location). Agents, objects and purposes are duly noted, but are subservient to act, agency and location. What is described then is events and their pragmatic effects in terms of some explanation linking act and agency in a given context. These features are typical of weak group/high grid. And this mode of argument is typical of mainstream U. S. society, its newspaper articles and TV stories, its historians and novelists.

(c) Organicist argument finds context insignificant or illusory. Thus all those who do history of ideas almost automatically resonate with this quadrant. The main focus of organicist argument is the purpose, the why, the unveiling of principles and ideas within historical processes. These principles are perceived to apply inexorably and inevitably since they express the eternal and abiding Truth. This, of course, is the strong group/high grid quadrant. All studies of the life of Jesus that focus on Jesus as teacher, as formulator of truth, or on the Bible as the repository of eternal truth applicable to all cultures and all social systems by a simple or complex study of the "text" fit in this quadrant. By and large, the majority of studies of the life of Jesus coming from W. Germany, England and Canada fall into this category. The strong group/high grid social script is typical of West German, British and Canadian elites (and their audiences?). Hence, it comes as no surprise that German and British graduate schools and those U.S. graduate schools staffed by their alumni would favor this mode of argument.<sup>3</sup>

(d) Mechanistic argument focuses upon location, act and agency. Historians adopting this mode seek to demonstrate how situations (where) and agencies of an extrahistorical sort control agents in their activities. In the gospels, for example, God, spirits, demons, and angels are the agencies in a specific place and time and context that control events. Extrahistorical forces need not be personified; they may be social structures, untouchable and invisible groups (e. g., conspirators and their conspiracies), or classes impelled by social/historical necessity. This is the mode of argument befitting strong group/low grid. It seems to underlay the Synoptics and Paul as well as most "liberation theology" uses of the life of Jesus. Figure 3 lists the features of semantic analysis and the relative modes of formal argument.

Now that some examples of comparative interest have been duly categorized, one might ask about the value of such an exercise. In the first place, I submit, such comparison allows for scholarly distancing. And scholarly distancing allows for intelligent and testable comparison. Secondly, this exercise helps underscore the truism that authors, past and present, have social locations. There is, of course, no immaculate perception. To understand persons from cultures other than our own, some such distancing process is necessary, if only out of fairness. Furthermore, to get to see who might be our scholarly, significant others, such an exercise helps one to determine his/her own social location and the implicit presuppositions that working in that location yield.

After working through the foregoing process, it becomes quite obvious that historical works on the strong group side of the model are necessarily

ethnocentric: they all appeal to a time and place conditioned story and argue for its abiding relevance, hence the emphasis on ideas, ideals (high grid); or on encouragement, hope for transformation, arguments for change in social structure (low grid). On the other hand, the works on the weak group side of the model are rather irrelevant: the picture of Jesus they portray either cannot be applied in contemporary weak group/high grid society (e.g., the U.S. mainstream: Jesus as faith healer or magician would be a deviant there), or the universal, polymorphic psychological personage of weak group/low grid remains highly idiosyncratic and utopian.<sup>4</sup> If historical reconstruction and cross cultural understanding are the focuses of concern, then I would argue in favor of the irrelevant picture of weak group/high grid provenance. Irrelevant does not mean unimportant; while ethnocentric does mean inaccurate. These seem to be our choices at present.

To sum up, the historian no less than the gossip, ancient and modern, necessarily weaves a set of implicit meanings into an explicit story. As story tellers select among events from the historical field (chronicle) they necessarily and simultaneously have to make their selections with a view to how the elements from the historical field will fit along some time framework (history). This selection process inevitably follows along a course set by three implicit questions: why did things happen the way that they did (mode of emplotment), what is the point of it all (mode of formal argument), and what should we -- author and audience -- do about it (mode of ideological implication). These three questions are with the story teller/historian from the very beginning of their activity. The questions guide the story telling process, and answers to them are inevitably provided in the realization of the story, the historian's final product.

### 3. The Social Location of John: Further Observations

In terms of the foregoing model, Jn is different from the other three gospels in that Jn belongs to the weak group/low grid quadrant while the Synoptics belong to the strong group/low grid quadrant. In terms of Jn's social location as it pertains to story tellers and their stories, Jn would be presenting his audience with the story of Jesus (as do Mark, Matthew and Luke), but with a romantic tragedy mode of emplotment, developing an implicit formist argument, and with an anarchic ideology. This is what figure 3 would have one expect. The weak group/low grid configuration in that figure indicates that in his story telling, Jn made a selection from among the things that Jesus said and did, and that were said and done to Jesus (chronicle), and put these in some time sequence (story) in such a way that:

(1) Jn's mode of emplotment, the "why and how did it turn out" aspect of the story, takes on the features of romantic tragedy. In general this mode of emplotment underscores how new forces and new conditions require and demand social interruption and step level changes to make life livable since values and experiences do not match. The unique, the individual, the particular are what count, while universalistic and changeless generalities are useless and illusory. The romantic aspect of this plot line focuses on the hero as individual, with the individual's heightened sense of self and self-identification. Note how in Jn, Jesus repeatedly makes "I am..." statements underscoring this sense of self and self-identification (Jn 6:35, 41, 48, 51; 8:12, 18; 9:5; 10:7, 9, 11, 14; 11:25; 14:6; 15:1, 5), although the items with which Jesus identifies himself in Jn's story are items which he previously offered to various persons in the narrative. This is the sort of



metaphorical self-identification pointing to new conditions, new forces, new values uniquely bound up with the individual, the unique, i.e., the person of Jesus. Further, even from the viewpoint of raw statistics, note how Jn employs personal pronouns. For example, "I" (as Greek pronoun) is used 146 times, compared with 18 times in Mk, 23 times in Mt and 26 times in Lk (the numbers are approximate and probably due to the quality of certain manuscripts). The simple "I am" phrases in Jn (4:26; 6:20; 7:36; 8:28, 58; 9:9; 13:9; 18:5, 6) are certainly worth the discussion they receive in most commentaries. The main point here, however, is that Jn is indeed concerned about the personal claims and individuality of his hero in a way absent from the other gospel stories about Jesus. In line with the romantic plot perspective, Jesus transcends the world of experience. Indeed the prologue to the gospel (Jn 1:1 ff) informs the reader/hearer of this fact in no uncertain terms. As the story develops, Jesus overcomes that world and is exalted above it in the end. In the dramatic progression of the story, Jesus moves to overcome evil, the light overcoming darkness. As a unique individual, he overcomes the world in which he is constrained and enveloped. He breaks the fetters of the social group ("his own") and stands out uniquely, alone.

The tragic aspect can be seen in the way Jesus attains his end through sets of contests/conflicts of increasing intensity. There are challenges and ripostes of the sort common to the Synoptic gospels and Mediterranean culture in general (see Malina 1981b: 25-50) only in Jn Jesus' successful ripostes do more than demonstrate that Jesus is an honorable teacher and healer. They have evidential value which furnishes those who would see with insight into the regularities of human existence controlled by God (the Father). In what he says and does in his contest against the world, Jesus, as Jn's hero, reveals why experience and values do not match in the world of human living; humankind is stuck in a sort of subhuman, unnatural condition. In his dying on the cross, the ultimate humiliation in the first century Mediterranean social experience, Jesus is exalted and thereby reveals a higher order principle that can endow life with meaning. Thus the story of Jesus shows that the conditions under which human beings must live in the world are unalterable, hence people must look beyond them for liberation, specifically by "believing into" (a phrase typical of Jn) the one sent by God, Jesus.

(2) Jn's mode of formal argument, "the point of it all" dimension of his story, is the formist mode. This mode of argument highlights the uniqueness of agents, agencies or means, and acts in the story. Jn presents a range of individual types to people his story: e.g., Nathaniel, Andrew, Nicodemus, the Samaritan woman, the man born blind, Lazarus, Peter, Thomas, the disciple whom Jesus loved. The reader/hearer can almost imagine each of them in terms of individualistic personality with its focus on uniqueness. And throughout the course of the gospel, Jesus himself stands out as a unique, forceful and significant "personality." As most students of the Bible know, these features are absent from the Synoptic gospels.<sup>5</sup>

The formist mode of argument seeks to identify the unique characteristics of agents, agencies and acts in the historical field and to assign them to classes with general qualities and specific attributes. In the course of his narrative, the author of Jn does this to an extensive degree that proves rather distinctive for a first century Mediterranean writing. On the other hand, descriptions and explanations of the location of the drama, of physical and social dimensions, are left on the periphery. Thus what Jn

offers the reader/hearer is a scattergram of information that highlights individual features. Jn does not express or articulate any laws or principles or regularities governing the human condition and revealed in the course of human interaction. Rather the attentive reader/hearer comes away with vivid and direct insight into agents, agencies and acts, set out in an impressionistic way.

The Synoptic tradition describes Jesus as refusing to offer signs to anyone. Jn, to the contrary, literally overwhelms the reader/hearer with signs, quite in line with a focus on the uniqueness of agencies and acts (Jn 2:1-11; 4:46-54; 5:1-18; 6:1-15; 9:1-41; 11:1-46; 20:1-10; and see 2:18-22 along with 20:17-18, 19-29; also 1:49; 4:16-19; 19:32-37). This series of signs, however, does not have the strong group/low grid aim of mobilizing the masses for a revolution, since even in Jn Jesus refuses the role of political leader (Jn 6:15). Rather, Jn's signs are to function in a weak group/low grid context where they are intended to give direction to the individual reader/hearer of the story. They seek to provoke commitment with the insight that in Jesus the biblical promises of God, and not just Deut. 18:15 as in the Synoptics, are fulfilled. Hence Jesus's unique actions, wrought by God's unique agency, show that Jesus is uniquely "the Christ, the Son of God" and that for the individual, commitment based on this insight means "eternal life."

Jesus's words and deeds display a series of distinctive standards emerging and standing over against the general run of customs and laws in vogue in society at large. This, in sum, is the mode of formal argument in Jn, a weak group/low grid mode.

(3) The ideological perspective of a story intimates "what the reader/hearer should then do about it." According to Jn this perspective moves the reader/hearer to look for humanity's best times in the past, when Jesus, the Word of God, "dwelt among us," when "we have beheld his glory" (Jn 1:14). This past is not irretrievable, since it can be realized and experienced in all its grandeur at any time, if people would only anchor themselves in Jesus, the Messiah (i.e., "believe into" Jesus, with commitment and loyalty; this phrase is used some 34 times in Jn, only once each in Mk and Mt and not at all in Lk).<sup>6</sup> This anchoring in Jesus equally entails an obligation to live one's restored fundamental humanity in terms of Jesus's standard of "love." This "love" refers to behavior based on mutual care and concern for those in the collectivity who have moved outside the boundaries of society at large due to allegiance to Jesus as Messiah, and thus find themselves in a weak group/low grid social location. In this quadrant, the collectivity simply constitutes a social aggregation, and certainly not a society (for such aggregations in low grid, see Schmidt, et al. 1977). A society requires some set of various and abiding social relations that define social roles. In the group of Jn, there are no sets of relations, only a single relation of "love" and a focal legitimate authority, the "disciple whom Jesus loved." This disciple replicates the legitimate authority of Jesus himself, it would seem (low grid authority is of a legitimate, customary sort since only high grid has "law," see Malina 1981a). Consequently, group members have only their participant role based on the relation of "love" (a form of commitment, like "believing into") with direct and immediate access to the God of Israel in Jesus. This social stance clearly implies total social transcendence, with rather full disregard for existing institutions, notably those from which the weak group/low grid members of the Jn group emerged. This aspect of Jn's story clearly indicates that those commentators who see

Jn's group as recently broken away from (or ejected from) existing Jewish institutions are quite correct (e.g., Brown 1979). For the "Johannine community" previous lines defining and delimiting meaningful social relations and institutions are largely eradicated. Thus group members find themselves beyond ordinary limits, in a situation in which the individual can find him/herself in a restored and culturally unadulterated humanity based on the realization of the new values that emerged in the uniqueness of Jesus, the Messiah. Hence the distance from "the Jews" and "this world," so patently marked in the narrative, because the group members' main concern would be to share no standards like the rules and customs followed in the grid/group quadrant from which they derived.

This, in brief, is what Jn's story of Jesus entails in terms of White's model of metahistory as superimposed on Douglas's grid/group. The model indicates that the reason the author of Jn tells the story in the way he does is not because he draws upon the "objective" meaning of the events in the pre-existence -- life -- death -- resurrection of Jesus, but because of constraints on perception deriving from his social location. Jn writes as he does because that is the way people come to perceive and articulate the meaning of Jesus's story within a weak group/low grid cultural script in the context of first century Jewish core values. The meanings imparted by Jn cohere well with all the dimensions of the weak group/low grid social location. While that social location does not determine the genius of a person or the exact form that his/her work might take, it does determine and define the limits within which an author's selection process can take place as well as the general shape of the patterns of perception available to persons in the quadrant. These perceptions of the author of Jn are realized and articulated in language, and Jn's language, likewise is weak group/low grid.

#### 4. John and Antilanguage

If one could say, as Halliday (1978: 171) does, that "the early Christian community was an antisociety, and its language was in this sense an antilanguage," the statement as it stands would be most appropriate for Jn and the group that originally resonated with its story, Jn's group. Halliday has sketched the notable characteristics of the phenomenon of antilanguage (Halliday 1978: 164-182). His description indicates that antilanguage finds its social residence among the people following weak group/low grid scripts (e.g., individuals put into prison, the underworld, adolescents) and forming antisocial groups. Obviously, the description fits Jn quite well. The rest of the New Testament writings bespeak a counter-society with a counter-language typical of competing groups in strong group/low grid settings. I submit, then, that only Jn reveals all the salient traits of an antilanguage.

According to Halliday, an antilanguage is a language derived from and generated by an antisocial group. And an antisocial group is a social collectivity that is set up within a larger society as a conscious alternative to it. The reason why persons might come up with a conscious alternative to the society in which they are in some way embedded are varied and many, e.g., being labelled a deviant, with active hostility by society at large against such individuals, lack of social concern for certain individuals, with a resulting passive social symbiosis, exile or rejection due to negative outcomes to an uprising or revolution, and the like. In terms of the grid/group model, such antisocietal groups are weak group/low

grid. Since weak group/low grid is a transitional social location, even if lasting several hundred years, the specific perceptions of persons in this quadrant depend on their initial social location. Thus strong group/low grid initial location results in antisociety when individuals are expelled from the strong group for some reason. Weak group/high grid initial location results in antisociety when individuals experience a collapsing or collapsed grid. In Jn's case, the document points to a collectivity that emerges from, and stands opposed to, strong group/low grid society and its competing groups. Concretely, the notable groups which Jn's collectivity opposes include "the (this) world" (79 times in Jn; 9 times in Mt and 3 each in Mk and Lk), and "the Jews" (71 times in Jn; 5 times in Mt and Lk; 7 times in Mk). These groups adamantly refuse to believe in Jesus as Messiah. Brown (1979: 168-169) singles out four more groups: the adherents of John the Baptist who do not as yet believe in Jesus, and three groups which claim to believe in Jesus: crypto-Christians, Jewish Christians and Christians of the apostolic churches. This last group is perhaps "the sheep not of this fold" (Jn 10:16) with which Jn's group has some relationship through the "shepherd." Jn's antilanguage is a form of resistance to this range of competing groups and develops for positive and negative reasons, to be considered shortly.

Perhaps the simplest way to discern the presence of antilanguage is to note its distinctive development of and penchant for new words in place of old ones. Antilanguage is language relexicalized, but only partially. Its implicit principle seems to be: some grammar but different vocabulary, though only in certain areas. And these areas are those of central concern to the focal interests and activities of the antisocietal group. In Jn, this concern is articulated as follows: "that you may continue to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name" (Jn 20:31). In other words, the author of Jn is concerned with spelling out the meaning of Jesus of Nazareth as Messiah and in developing emotional anchorage "in Jesus" for his collectivity. It is to this end that the author develops his very different vocabulary.

Furthermore, it is characteristic of antilanguage not simply to relexicalize in its area of concern, but to overlexicalize by employing a rather large range of lexical items to cover the same area. This feature is easily demonstrable in Jn (see Kyser 1976). First of all, note his contrasts between "spirit, the above, life, light, not of the/this world, freedom, truth, love" and their opposites: "flesh, the below, death, darkness, the/this world, slavery, lie, hate." These words are variants used to describe contrasting spheres of existence, opposing modes of living and being. Similarly, and with extremely little appreciable difference in meaning, Jn speaks of "believing into Jesus," or "following" him, of "abiding in" him or "loving" him, of "keeping his word," of "receiving" him, or "having" him, or "seeing" him. Again, since Jn is antilanguage, and Jn's group is weak group/low grid, this is all quite predictable.

In his general model of language, Halliday distinguishes three linguistic modes of meaning: the ideational, the interpersonal, and the textual. The ideational refers to what is being said or described; the interpersonal looks to the personal qualities of the communicating partners; and the textual pertains to the qualities of any piece of language to form text (e.g., cohesion). Again, what one says is ideational, with whom one speaks is interpersonal and how one speaks is textual (see Halliday 1978: 8-36; the model on 69 and its explanation on 125-126). These components

have to be singled out here because it is typical of antilanguage to de-emphasize the ideational and focus upon the interpersonal and textual alone. For example, a comparison of the text of Jn (the whole gospel as story) with the texts of the Synoptics will readily indicate that Jn downplays the ideational function of language while highlighting the interpersonal and textual functions. The linguistic dimensions of how Jesus speaks (textual component) and with whom he speaks (interpersonal component), come through in a way not found in the Synoptic narratives from strong group/low grid communities. Now, Halliday notes, it is these two dimensions (interpersonal and textual) in their antilanguage form that account for overlexicalization. For example, overlexicalization based on the textual function of language (how Jesus speaks, how others speak to Jesus) is revealed in forms of verbal display such as punning and word play. This feature is quite apparent in Jn's pattern of ambiguity, misunderstanding and clarification (Jn 2:19 ff.; 3:3 ff.; 4:32 ff.; 6:33 ff.; 8:31 ff.; 8:38 ff.; 11:11 ff.; 11:23 ff.; 13:8 ff.; 14:4 ff.; 14:7 ff.; 14:21 ff.; 16:16 ff. All of these text-segments reveal verbal display or word plays relative to the following: the destruction of the temple, being born again, water, food, bread, freedom, father, sleep, resurrection, washing, way, seeing, manifestation, a little while -- respectively). This feature is likewise manifested in Jn's penchant for irony (Jn 2:9-10; 4:12; 7:27; 7:42; 7:52; 11:16; 11:36; 12:19; 13:37; 18:31; 18:38; 19:5; 19:14; 19:19 ff.).

As for the interpersonal component, overlexicalization deriving from this function of language (who is involved, of whom and to whom Jesus speaks) is indicated by the set of words that have the same denotation, but have quite a different connotation based on the attitude and commitment they entail in an interpersonal context. This includes, for example, all the "I am..." statements previously referred to. The words "bread" (Jn 6:35), "light" (8:12), "door" (10:9), "life" (11:25-26), "way" (14:6), "vine" (15:5) have the same denotation in the contexts in which they are employed; they refer to various, real world objects. However, when identified with Jesus in an "I am..." proposition, each takes on some interpersonal dimension. The synonyms for the activities of discipleship ("to believe, come, abide, follow, love, keep words, receive, have see") and those for the two contrasting realms ("the above, spirit," etc., and "the below, flesh," etc., listed previously) point in the same direction, i.e., to the interpersonal component of language.

This orientation toward the interpersonal and textual modes of the linguistic system accounts for the way social values are foregrounded, highlighted, and underscored in antilanguage. After all, weak group/low grid collectivities seek the implementation of new values in place of old ones, not new structures. New structures in place of old ones form the focus of strong group/low grid concerns (e.g., the Synoptics, Paul). Emphasis on new structures underscores and features the ideational mode of the linguistic system. What is, in fact, happening and what should, in fact, be happening are emphasized, while who is involved and what is said are of lesser concern.

What uses do antilanguage serve? Halliday observes that antilanguages are generally replications of social forms based on highly distinctive values that are clearly set apart from those of the society from which antisocial members derive. Like language itself, antilanguage is the bearer of social reality, but of an alternative social reality that runs counter to



the social reality of society at large. Thus antilanguage serves to maintain inner solidarity under pressure. The pressure, of course, stems from the surrounding broader society from which weak group/low grid collectivities stem and in which they are to a large extent still embedded. Furthermore, for individuals to maintain solidarity with their fellow antisocial members and not fall back into the margins of the groups from which they left or were ejected, some sort of alternative ideology along with emotional anchorage in the new collectivity is necessary. This necessity is best served by demonstrations of mutual care and concern on the part of those in the antisocietal group so as to establish strong affective identification on the part of newcomers into the group as well as those on its fringes ready to swing out. Of course, this describes the process of resocialization (see Mol 1976: 50-54; 142-201). Just as language is crucial to the social construction of reality and to the socialization of new members into that reality, so too antilanguage is crucial to the social reconstruction of reality and to the resocialization of newcomers into that reality. Jn is an instance of such antilanguage in the Christian tradition.

From the viewpoint of linguistics, the process of resocialization and solidarity maintenance makes special demands on the antilanguage. In particular, the antilanguage in question must facilitate the process of establishing strongly affective ties with both the reputational legitimate authority who is the central influence in the collectivity as well as with significant others in the group. And this process has to be geared to the individual group member, just as the original socialization process was. Now the linguistic genre most appropriate to this end is conversation and its implicit modes of reciprocity. In Jn again, there is ample evidence of distinctive conversations with Jesus that serve a resocialization function (Jn 3:1 - 4:42; 5:10 ff.; 6:22 ff.; 9:13 - 10:42; 11:1-44; 11:45 - 12:36a; 13 - 17). How these conversations unfold is common knowledge. Jesus begins to converse with some individual person, moves on to address that person in monologue fashion and the monologue turns into an address to the reader/hearer. Throughout these text-segments, there is heavy foregrounding of interpersonal meanings directed to individuals. It seems that these conversations are the feature of Jn that holds constant and perennial appeal for persons in weak group settings: Jesus speaks to them in an individual way, not as group members as is the case in the rest of the Synoptics (or for the addresses of the remaining New Testament writings). It must be emphasized that it is Jn's weak group/low grid antilanguage that accounts for this feature of the gospel. (In this regard, the use of the pronoun "you" singular in Greek is distinctive: 60 times in Jn, 10 times in Mk, 18 in Mt and 26 times in Lk; similarly the pronoun "you" plural in Greek: 68 times in Jn, 11 in Mk, 30 in Mt, and 28 times in Lk -- such emphatic use of the pronoun in Greek simply underscores the interpersonal dimension).

Halliday notes the importance of a further characteristic of antilanguages, namely that a given antilanguage is not simply a specialized variety, a technical variety of ordinary language used in a special way or in particular, technical contexts (e.g., technical jargons, argots and the like). Rather, an antilanguage arises among persons in groups espousing and held by alternative perceptions of reality, reality as experienced and set up in opposition to some established mode of conception and perception. Consequently, an antilanguage is nobody's "mother tongue," nor is it a predictable "mother tongue" derivative. Rather antilanguage exists solely in a social context of resocialization. Like any other language, it is a means of realizing the cultural script of the group in question, a means of

expressing perceptions of the reality mediated by that script by actively creating and maintaining that reality by means of language. But, unlike ordinary language, antilanguage creates and expresses a reality that is inherently an alternative reality, one that is constructed precisely in order to function as an alternative to society at large. In the antilanguage of Jn, it is the weak group/low grid variety of a group that emerged from and still lives among a strong group/low grid society, the society of first century Mediterranean Hellenism in general, and of Judaism in particular. Thus what is significant in antilanguage is not its distance from the language of strong group/low grid society, but the tension between the two. Both the society at large and the antisocial group share the same overarching system of meaning, just as both are part and parcel of the same overarching social system. Yet they stand in opposition to and in tension with each other. The reason for underscoring this point is that to appreciate the new values and perceptions generated by a weak group/low grid, antisocietal collectivity, one must understand the larger society to which it stands opposed.

The counter-reality generated by weak group/low grid collectivities such as the Johannine community has certain implications. First of all, it implies an emphasis on new core values and an attempt to create standards and structures to implement those values. Then, it likewise implies a preoccupation with social boundaries, with social definition and defense of identity by means of repeated and varied articulation of the new reality now so clearly perceived. Of course, both of these points are realized in Jn's strong contrast between "the above, spirit," etc., and "the below, flesh," etc., and the forms of behavior proper to each. Further, the counter-reality in question implies a special conception of information and knowledge -- a feature more than amply highlighted in Jn. Finally, such counter-reality implies that social meanings will be seen as oppositions; values are defined in terms of what they are not. Again, in Jn, it is quite clear that Jesus's prodigies are simply not about what is going on, i.e., healing or rescue, but about something more and something other than one can ostensibly witness.

As Halliday has observed, the overlexicalization of antilanguages is a form of variant in linguistics. In general, a variant is an alternative realization of a linguistic element on the next, or some higher level of abstraction in the linguistic system. A higher level realization always has the same meaning in some respect as the items falling beneath it. For example, the lexical items, "fruit," "vegetables," "meat," and "bread" have "food" as their variant. "Food" is an alternative realization of a linguistic element such as "bread" or "meat" on a higher level in the linguistic system. Similarly, this higher level realization, "food," always has the same meaning in some respect as the items falling beneath it, in this case, "fruit, vegetables, meat, bread." Thus, "fruit" can mean "food," and "bread" can mean "food," while the lexical item "food" can be used to mean any of the foregoing; they are technically variants of the word, "food." Similarly, in Jn, "spirit, the above, life, light, not of the/this world, freedom, truth, love" are all variants of the "new reality" which Jn identifies with and in Jesus of Nazareth. On the contrary, "the flesh, the below, death, darkness, this/the world, slavery, lie, hate" are all variants of what Jn, and the collectivity addressed in the work, oppose -- the "old reality" of the strong group/low grid society from which they came.

However, the significant thing about the lexical items (words and

sentences) distinctive of an antilanguage, as Halliday notes, is that many of them have no equivalent meanings at all in the standard language of the broader society. Sentences such as: "I and the Father (= God) are one" (Jn 10:30), "Truly, truly I say to you, before Abraham was, I am" (8:58), or the identification of Jesus of Nazareth with the pre-existing Word of God become flesh (1:1 ff.) would simply be meaningless in the language of the broader society. This does not mean that they could not be understood and judged to be meaningless, or that they could not be translated (after all, our English versions do them adequate justice). Rather, what it does mean is that such propositions do not function as meaning bearing language in the semantic system of regular language, even the regular "religious" language of contemporary early Christianity and Judaism. It is quite significant to note that there are no such sentences in the writings of Paul or the other gospel and non-Johannine New Testament documents.

The foregoing considerations point to the fact that an antilanguage is a metaphor for the regular language of society at large. Metaphorization takes place when some common, often implicit, quality proper to one entity is predicated of another, e.g., "My brother is a lion." Here the implicit property is strength or ferocity; thus the explicit sentence would read: "My brother is as strong as/as ferocious as a lion." In antilanguage, such a metaphorical quality appears all the way through the system. Halliday tells us that it is this metaphorical quality that defines an antilanguage. In Jn, this metaphorical quality can be seen in the "I am..." statements where Jesus says of himself: "I am bread, light, a door, life, way, vine," and the like. The metaphorical quality inherent in the list of ambiguity -- misunderstanding -- clarification sequences noted previously also point to the same thing. Metaphor constitutes the element of antilanguage that is present in all language to some extent. For much of everyday language is, in fact, metaphorical, e.g., horsepower in an automobile, a cell in biology, conceiving ideas. Yet the metaphorical quality of everyday language is lost and has come to be identified with regular speech, with reality itself. On the other hand, what distinguishes an antilanguage is that when it is compared with the existing language system of the culture in which it emerges and the society against which it stands, it is itself a metaphorical entity. Hence in antilanguage, metaphorical modes of expression are the norm. Metaphorical modes of expression are an antilanguage's regular pattern of realization.

As pointed out previously, the main form of discourse used in socialization and in reality maintenance is conversation. The reality generating and maintaining power of language lies in conversation. It is cumulative and depends for its effectiveness on continuous enforcement in social interaction. In Jn, all the great Johannine metaphors emerge in conversations. Their metaphorical points are made in conversation, thus maintaining the resocialization quality of the work in the reader's/hearer's being addressed by Jesus in these conversations as the dialogue becomes monologue. In the resocialization process, conversation relies heavily upon foregrounding and highlighting interpersonal meanings, and the great Johannine conversations surely do that. Finally, conversation depends for its power to generate reality on its being casual. In Jn, again, Jesus's many and frequent conversations so often point to casual encounters with individuals with whom the weak group reader/hearer can emphasize and thus take on the role of conversation partner as Jesus moves on to monologue in the second part of these conversations.



A final point Halliday makes is that within the ideational mode of meaning (what is being talked about), an antilanguage may adopt linguistic structures and lexical collocations that are self-consciously opposed to the norm of established language. This is typical of the more intellectual antilanguages. Now there is evidence of this feature in Jn, although many such items are "translated out" in English versions, e.g., in Jn the verb "to believe" most often has the preposition "into;" Jesus refers to his death as "being lifted up;" and for Jn, seeing is believing throughout the story of Jesus's activity. Consequently, the modes of linguistic expression in antilanguage, when seen from the standpoint of the established language, appear diffuse, round about and metaphorical -- and so they are from that angle.

But, seen on their own terms, they appear direct and forceful, powerful manifestations of the linguistic system in the service of the construction of reality. It is the reality being constructed and newly maintained that is oblique, since it can only be seen as a metaphorical transformation of the "true" reality of strong group/low grid society. But, the function of an antilanguage text with respect to that reality is a reinforcing one, all the more direct because it is a reality which needs much reinforcement. It is the new reality, the new experience and perceptions, of a weak group/low grid collectivity.

### Conclusion

John is, indeed, different from the other gospels. The foregoing considerations deriving from sociolinguistics point up precisely why this is the case. Further, the metahistorical model superimposed on and outfitted with grid/group dimensions equally provides explanation for the distinctive qualities of Jn. These models provide the historical interpretation with a set of heuristic tools and testable conclusions lacking in the usual intuitive and impressionistic approaches to biblical texts. While the sociolinguistic level of analysis is simply a first step to understanding the Johannine group by means of its shared story, it is an important first step. For it furnishes an explanation for the distinctive Johannine ways of describing God and human relations with God. This explanation, of course, is rooted in the social behavior of Jn's collectivity, used as analogy to explain the God revealed in Jesus. Further, this mode of analysis enables the interpreter to come to know and appreciate the personages who embodied faith in Jesus in the first century, Mediterranean weak group/low grid contexts -- their willingness to identify Jesus with the divinity of Jewish tradition, their self-distancing from their original mooring in strong group/low grid Judaism, and their emphatic stance relative to interpersonal commitment within their group. And, it helps the modern student to discover social persons in that difficult, yet exhilarating social location, persons who made sense of the overarching meaning of human existence "in Jesus" in highly creative and significant ways. Finally, such analysis highlights the ever present problem of weak group/low grid persons and the group, i.e., the need to return to stable society and an articulation of Christianity befitting such society. Perhaps the Johannine letters intimate this movement, with the beginnings of the dissolution of Jn's antisocietal group.

NOTES

1. I use the word "text" as it is used in linguistics, i.e., "meaningful configurations of language intended to communicate" (De Beaugrande 1980:1). A sentence from a biblical text is a text-segment; only rarely can a lexical item (sentence or word) be a text, e.g., "Beware of dog." In this usage, sentences express complete thoughts and can be understood, but not interpreted. Texts, on the other hand, can be both understood and interpreted. Interpretation requires some larger frame of reference; texts have these built in as a rule due to their "texture" (see Halliday 1978). For a model of reading that explains how squiggles on some surface come to communicate, I follow the conclusions of Sanford and Garrod 1981.

2. Some might consider this procedure to be circular. However, such circular procedure seems normal to human perception: "The question of what happens first (perception of an object as a whole or perception of salient general features composed to perceive an object as a whole) has been much discussed by students of perception. In order to perceive that something is, say, a table, it would seem necessary to use information about its location, size, and shape, but how is it possible to judge its attributes until we know what 'it' is? Which comes first, the attributes or the whole? Experience with modern systems for processing information has taught us that such circles need not be vicious. Minsky and Papert remark in this connection that it is quite common in computer programs -- and presumably in thought processes -- for two different procedures to use each other as subprocedures. When the system is forming a percept, object-forming procedures can call on shape-recognizing procedures as subprocedures; when it pays attention to shape, shape-recognizing procedures can call on object-forming procedures as subprocedures. The assumption that one set of procedures must, in every case, precede the other imposes a rigid and unnecessary constraint on the complexity of our hypothesis about object perception" (from Miller and Johnson-Laird 1976:46).

It bothers some people when a large number of societies covering hundreds and, at times, thousands of years, with multiple and unrelated languages, are compared so simply in terms of four social locations and story lines. It might be of interest to those with such objections to consider Thom's mathematical demonstration for the existence of only eight ultimate shapes in four dimensions. If human beings can perceive only eight shapes in their limited four dimensional perspective, then, as Thom himself suggests, perhaps there can only be eight ultimate social structures within the human experience of humankind (see Thom 1969, with applications for the social sciences in Thompson 1979, and more recently in anatomy by Warwick and Williams 1981: 85-92).

3. The fact that a goodly number of U.S. scholars in the humanities favor this mode is indicative of the pervading German and British influence upon U.S. scholarship and its gatekeepers, including publishers (see Hynes 1981: 87-114 for biblical scholarship, and on typically U.S. values and experience, see Williams 1970).

4. The weak group/low grid social location of Jn, I believe, explains the role of Jn's gospel in nearly every enthusiastic movement in this history of Christianity; Kung 1967: 191-203 offers a painless overview. Further, it equally explains the great popularity of Jn in the individualistic U.S. Aside from banners at national, professional football games and roadside billboards, the gospel of Jn has figured prominently in the national,

saturation TV advertising for free copies of the booklet, Power for Living by Jamie Buckingham, commissioned by the Arthur S. DeMoss Foundation to celebrate the civil religion's Year of the Bible (1983). Jn figures quite prominently in that book, and the mailing features an enclosed pamphlet containing only Jn in paraphrase. Apart from Jn, the New Testament makes few points for individualism and individualistic religion.

5. Weak group is the individualism dimension of the group axis. Jn is the only N.T. writing in the weak group quadrant, hence a writing with resonance for individuals. However, further specification of types of individualism seems necessary, given the fact that in one sense every human being is an individual. To begin with the U.S. case, I have noted elsewhere that "Clifford Geertz has observed that our conception of the individual as '...a bounded, unique, more or less integrated motivational and cognitive universe, a dynamic center of awareness, emotion, judgement and action organized into a distinctive whole and set contrastively both against other such wholes and against its social and natural background, is, however incorrigible it may seem to us, a rather peculiar idea within the context of the world's cultures'" (Malina 1981b: 54; citing Geertz 1976: 225). The U.S. mainstream is characterized by "institutional" individualism. In strong group/high grid, only persons occupying peak positions in hierarchies are expected to be such institutional individuals; the rest of such societies feature dyadic personality. Hence, I would call strong group/high grid individualism "hierarchic" individualism. Strong group/low grid, on the other hand, consists of individuals without hierarchic location, "networking" individuals or "prescribed" individuals. Finally, in weak group/low grid, persons find themselves in antisocietal limbo, in liminal communitas, hence as "generalized" individuals. In Jn, this generalized individualism finds its expression in Jesus as simply "the anthropos," as in Jn 19:5; see, further, Malina 1979a; 1981b: 51-68, and the discussion inaugurated by Dumont 1982, with responses by Bellah, Burrige and Robertson 1982, and Eisenstadt 1983.

6. This feature, too, relates to the observation in note 4.

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Response by E. A. Judge, *Professor of History, Philosophy and Politics  
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How can models be validly transferred to a culture from which they are not derived? And how can we know that linguistic patterns will disclose social location (as distinct from orientation)?

In two recent articles, Bruce Malina has spelled out the cautions that must be applied in the use of models as a way of grasping what an ancient writing is saying, and the checks that can be made on their adequacy; he has also explained why a "symbolic interaction" model will work where ones derived from comparative religion will not (because "religion" was not a self-contained social system at all until later antiquity, being "embedded" in state or family).<sup>1</sup> There is much promise here of improved historical understanding. In The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology, he has given examples of the use of explanatory models derived from appropriate modern societies of the Mediterranean. The aim is to help students look beyond their own horizons and see the effects of some of the basic social mores of the times in New Testament writers. The considerable success of this experiment arises from the established similarities between the ancient and modern societies concerned, as well as from the author's sure feel both for the New Testament and for other contemporary ancient evidence. But it was also secured against criticism by leaving open the question of how much of the picture it had filled in. The models used were "mid-range" ones meant to explain segments of behavior only.<sup>2</sup> Now we are offered a heavily self-reinforcing stack of analytical devices that appears to overwhelm more tentative or piece-meal approaches. Since I assume that there will be others who can say whether the end result is convincing in terms of New Testament studies or linguistics, I limit my remarks to certain questions of particular interest to the historian.

First, I endorse in general the comments (page 5, paragraph 3) on the value of such exercises. As with any human encounter, the historian's approach to the product of another mind instinctively proceeds by assuming more common ground. A deliberate attempt at distancing must therefore be made if we hope to discover more than an image of ourselves. (It is interesting to see "fairness" invoked to justify this. I, too, assume that there is a moral responsibility here. But to whom is it owed in the case of the dead?) The conventional historical way of establishing distance is by the detailed plotting of different conventions that can be seen at work in the source material. This certainly has the merit (one hopes) of avoiding anachronism, but it may not take us far enough. We can see that Roman noblemen were not after all nineteenth-century English gentlemen. But how shall we tell whether they were twentieth-century American politicians or not? The application of a comprehensive formula as proposed seems to solve many basic questions at once. But is this because we have at last arrived back in the first century, or simply freed ourselves of all cultural relativities? Has the distancing abstracted us from social reality altogether? "The cultural typologies float in the dusty air of seminars and museums, only becoming real as blackboard tabulations or labels on display cases."

Introducing a recent series of historical applications of her group/grid model, Mary Douglas expresses surprise at some of the results,



which contradicted what she thought they would show up.<sup>4</sup> That at least encourages one to think that the model could have some independent value. But it also warns us that grid/group analysis, in "reducing social variation to only a few grand types, each of which generates necessarily its own self-sustaining perceptual blinkers,"<sup>5</sup> may in turn be creating its own form of limited vision. We know moreover that ancient writers were quite capable of inventing a false world into which they might retreat from the pains of reality. Parasitic urban poets may pretend to be cowherds or farmers; Byzantine court historians may write as though they were statesmen of a thousand years before, imitating even the rules of Attic prose -- how will the socio-linguist be able to break their code? Before we conclude that the model has settled the social location of a writer whose identity has not otherwise been worked out, why not see if it can enable an otherwise uninstructed reader to spot the location of somewhere this has been done? For this test I nominate Sallust, Seneca and Tacitus (selecting in each case a large extract free of otherwise telltale clues).<sup>6</sup> If the experiment works, we could then try it on other notorious cases of identity crisis, such as the Historia Augusta,<sup>7</sup> or upon some new-found texts that will otherwise be the subject of a fruitless debate.<sup>8</sup> We could also test the assumption that there is a community-generated pattern of thought (if that indeed is what is implied) by examining a range of letters from a closely documented and dated ancient town, the richest prospect being that of Oxyrhynchus.<sup>9</sup>

Once we know from such tests that a modern model will work for antiquity, we then face the question of whether it is telling us the essential outline of the social world of the times, or something more eccentric. As with "religion," so the very concept of "society" puts us at once outside the thought-world of antiquity.<sup>10</sup> Is it then possible for people to be classified in such terms without missing the heart of their world? Bruce Malina prudently draws back from trying to discern Hayden White's "mode of ideological implication" in the case of John. But to speculate that "perhaps there can only be eight ultimate social structures within the human experiences of mankind" (n. 2, paragraph 2) seems to push one towards the risk of creating pigeonholes where none existed. The question can be settled by the New Testament specialists perhaps. Each no doubt has his list of distinctive features of John.<sup>11</sup> Does the model catch up enough of them to ensure a basically true description of the phenomenon, let alone explain "precisely why" John is different from the Synoptics (p. 9)? If the answer to this is positive, we still need to ask whether it matters. How extensive are the things in common between John and the Synoptics, and might they not in the end lead us to put all the gospels into the same quadrant of the diagram?

Locating John in terms of Halliday's general model of language should also keep the New Testament philologists busy. It is important to recognize that the ideational, interpersonal and textual modes of meaning (pp. 13 - 14) were distinguished by Halliday at first principally on the basis of a classification of syntactical elements within words (rather than of their lexical meanings). A verb or a noun thus contributes through its several concurrent syntactical functions to each of the three general functions of language at the same time. Thus with a verb its tense contributes to the ideational function, its person to the interpersonal one, and its voice to the textual one. "There is a high degree of indeterminacy in the fuller picture;" "the syntax of a language is organized in such a way that it expresses as a whole the range of linguistic functions;" "the symptoms of

functional diversity are not to be sought in single sentences or sentence types;" "typically each sentence embodies all functions, though one or other may be more prominent."<sup>12</sup> In such a complex web of functions the measurement of prominence will have to be systematic, and not impressionistic, if it is to count in assigning the four gospels to their respective quarters of the group/grid world.

There is another problem. Granted for the moment that the model does correspond to human experience, and that it works in one age as in another, why does one not go for those writers in the other age who fall in the same quadrant as oneself? The U.S. mainstream is said to be weak group/high grid (p. 7) so that the weak group picture of Jesus cannot be applied (p. 9). On the other hand, it is precisely the weak group/low grid location of John that explains its great popularity in the individualistic U.S. (n. 6). It should not be hard to test the strength of these gambits by obtaining the relative circulation figures for John for a cross-section of modern cultures. And even if one does find oneself in the same quadrant as an ancient writer one admires, it is not clear that this implies much in the way of common social experience. John seems to give Bruce Malina the impression of belonging to a somewhat withdrawn, inward-looking, personalized collectivity. But for Mary Douglas the weak group/low grid quadrant is typically inhabited in modern times by the competitive entrepreneurial individualists of capitalism.<sup>13</sup> In that case quadration might be a useful way of discovering why one sort might appeal to the other, if it does, but it would hardly help much towards an ordinary social description of the Johannine community. Then again, they may yet turn out to have been the capitalists of the ancient world. Perhaps the solution to these enigmas lies in the formulation (too gnostic to be clear to me) on p. : "Irrelevant does not mean unimportant; while ethnocentric does mean inaccurate."

This brings me to what is claimed as the second point of usefulness in the comparative application of models. It underscores the truism that authors, past and present, have social locations (p. 7). But this begs the question of what is meant by "location," and of the sense in which it is possible for models to elicit information about that from one's writings. If Bruce Malina means by "location" one's place in an actual network of social relations in some sense that would be apparent to an outside observer in real life, as distinct from where one would like to be, or imagines one is, it is certainly not proved that sociolinguistics has the capacity to define that. What it is telling us might be more accurately labelled "social orientation" or "social aspiration." One has only to reflect on the "mode of ideological implication" (fig. 2) to recognize this. Everyone will be familiar with the small academic common-room where all four "locations" are equally represented. Yet the people who occupy them are identically placed in society in all material respects -- salary, work schedule, living conditions, family commitments. They, in fact, are all firmly settled in the same social location in any ordinary sense of the word. The same would no doubt be found to apply with other close-knit social groups, as with workers in a factory, or the occupants of an old people's home, whose social outlook (as expressed for example in voting behavior) will divide across all the main options available. It is not clear, then, in what sense "the meanings encoded in a text" can be said to "derive ultimately from a social system" (p. 1). The ideas, no doubt, exist because of the system, but do they show where the thinker resides, as distinct from where he faces, within that system? The conception of "a transitional social location" (p.13)

perhaps shows that this problem is sensed, but it is not, I think, resolved.

The proposition that social situation will allow one to predict the sort of thing that will be said (p. 1) is hardly established by the negative examples given. Witness the frustration of someone in a bus who cannot quite catch the fascinating conversation going on in the seat behind him, or of the non-native speaker who cannot grasp the point of something being explained to him in spite of every circumstantial factor pointing him in the right direction. What lecturer, or writer for that matter, has not had to cope with people taking the very opposite construction of his actual words from what had been intended? In the fourth century, as Ammianus Marcellinus makes clear, rumour and misconstruction arising in such ways regularly cost people their lives, and only the most determined personal confrontation with the emperor, accompanied by convincing proofs of a circumstantial kind, might suffice to get one out of the conclusions the others had jumped to. Closer to the philological home-front, let the strange history of the oracle at Oenoanda serve as a warning.<sup>14</sup>

Mary Douglas calls her quadrants not "locations" but "environments."<sup>15</sup> They do not control the will of man. "An individual's choices are... freely his own." Yet there is an "exhaustion of certain possibilities." She slips easily into the comforts of her pigeon-holes. "The limits are real; ...it is not possible to stay in two parts of the diagram at once." It is certainly possible to flit from one to another, however, as anyone who has listened to politicians at work will know. Douglas, like Malina, does not seem ready to draw a clear distinction between mental attitude (which can be temporarily and even willfully assumed) and the lived experience of social relations (which can persist, and even be enjoyed, to the silent contradiction of one's ideals, as Christians and Marxists are always able to point out to each other). She speaks of being in one's quadrant as "a way of life which is at the same time inevitably a way of thought." Both history and common sense defy her. While life can be seen to shape thought, and vice versa, it is also clear that, especially when it comes to calculated expression, the mind revels in contradiction. Malina, like Douglas, can be seen striving to keep options open, yet as with her the very existence of the diagram develops a compulsive power over the argument, and he reaches often for the language of determinism as the too willing mind drives its highway through the jungle of experience. Wilhelm Dilthey's Weltanschauungslehre long ago formulated a comparable typology, but clearly tied it to the world as perceived.<sup>16</sup> Since he settled for three types, I wonder what he missed -- or has geometric logic created a superfluous quadrant? Given the temporary character of the weak group/low grid location, perhaps it resides mainly in the mind's eye. For all the sharpening of perception that it offers, sociolinguistics may yet have to await the discovery of some external evidence before it can convince us that it has taken us beyond the self-image of the writer. He may even turn out in real life to have occupied another quadrant. In that case, he would be found to have been challenging its complacency or consoling its anxieties with the radical implications he saw in the figure of Jesus.

#### NOTES

1. see 1982 and 1983 in Malina's bibliography above.
2. See 1981b, p.v.

3. Mary Douglas, 1978 in Malina's bibliography, p. 2.
4. Essays in the Sociology of Perception (London, 1982), p. 116.
5. Ibid., p. 2.
6. In each case known social rank creates serious complexities for the modern reader in interpreting the written product. See R. Syme, Sallust (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1964); M. T. Griffin, Seneca: A Philosopher in Politics (Oxford, 1976); R. Syme, Tacitus, vol. 2 (Oxford, 1958).
7. R. Syme, Ammianus and the Historia Augusta (Oxford, 1968); id., Emperors and Biography (Oxford, 1971).
8. E.g., the unexpectedly early ii<sup>2</sup>/i<sup>1</sup>B.C.) and personalised aretology of Isis from Macedonia, ed. Y. Grandjean, Une nouvelle aretologie d'Isis a Maronee (Leiden, 1975), reproduced with discussion of subsequent literature in G. H. R. Horsley, New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity: A Review of the Greek Inscriptions and Papyri Published in 1976, no. 2 (North Ryde, 1981); or the puzzling Latin hymn of the fourth century published from a Barcelona papyrus by R. Roca-Puig, Himne a la Verge Maria "Psalmus Responsorius", quoted in G. H. R. Horsley, New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity: A Review of the Greek Inscriptions and Papyri Published in 1977 (Macquarie University, 1982), no. 92, p. 141.
9. The Oxyrhynchus Papyri series alone runs to 3500 items, many of them letters.
10. E. A. Judge, "Gesellschaft: Neues Testament/Alte Kirche" in Theologische Realenzyklopaedie 1984; more extended discussion in my "The Social Identity of the First Christians: a Question of Method in Religious History" Journal of Religious History 11(1980)201-217; Rank and Status in the World of the Caesars and St. Paul (Christchurch, 1982); "Social Conformity and Innovation in St. Paul: Some Clues From Contemporary Documents" Tyndale Bulletin 35(1984)3-26.
11. Some recent stocktakings will be found in C.K. Barrett, The Gospel of John and Judaism (London, 1975); O. Cullmann, The Johannine Circle (Philadelphia, 1976); and, E. A. Culpepper, Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel: A Study in Literary Design (Philadelphia, 1983).
12. Not having access to Language as Social Semiotic when I wrote this I quoted Halliday from Explorations in the Function of Language (London, 1973), p. 108, with table facing p. 140.
13. See the tabulation in Cultural Bias, p. 21.
14. G. E. Bean, Journeys in Northern Lycia 1965-1967, (Denkschriften Oesterreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Phil.-Hist. Klasse, 104; Vienna), no. 37; see G. H. R. Horsley, New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity: A Review of the Greek Inscriptions and Papyri Published in 1977 (Macquarie University, 1982), p. 39. On an altar relief set high in the wall is an inscription that has probably been available for all to read since the second century; when the first modern copy was made in the nineteenth century, it was taken to be a metrical funerary text too mutilated to be restored; it was subsequently improved by being inspected from a ladder; after being republished at the turn of the century with the aid of field

glasses, it has now been photographed with a telescopic lens, and turns out to be an oracle of Clarian Apollo more enigmatic in reality than any reconstruction would have dared to make it.

15. Essays in the Sociology of Perception, pp. 4, and (below) 7, 4, 4 and 5 respectively; on p. 3 she calls the quadrants "four extreme visions of social life," which seems to me exactly right.

16. A simple summary will be found in H. A. Hodges, Wilhelm Dilthey: An Introduction (London, 1944), pp. 99-101: the three are naturalism, the idealism of freedom (based on the experience of free will and moral obligation), and objective idealism (a determinism of value, as with Stoics).

Response by Dr. Stephen Breck Reid, *Assistant Professor of Old Testament Pacific School of Religion and the Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley*

This is an exciting and insightful paper. It is an argument in three movements. The first movement is the discussion of the work of Mary Douglas and the typology of the grid and group. He posits that the groups of the New Testament - in this case, the Gospel of John - can be understood using this typology. Second, he makes use of the work of Hayden White. This is the way that communities talk about their past and present. White also has a typology. Malina tries to match these two typologies as complementary. At this point, Malina has argued that different types of groups use different types of language and genres in their historical reflections. He then applies these typologies to the Johannine material. Then, the third movement is the analysis of the material using the categories of Michael Halliday. It was a particularly nuanced discussion.

Nevertheless, there are several questions raised in the paper. It is as provocative as it is insightful. First, there is the question of whether the material that Malina has brought together is compatible. This is related to the question of how persons using sociological material and theory to interpret ancient texts can use a number of social theories. The Mary Douglas "grid-group" typology is socially located in the Western world. As such, we are not surprised that the question for the "grid-group" typology is the way that groups understand themselves with regard to the relationship between the group and the individual. One can question the overall ability of this typology to illuminate the wide range of issues in antiquity and the literature of antiquity as represented in the Gospel of John. Malina has used White and Halliday for their work on the sociolinguistic work. However, the result was that the limited social theory of the "grid-group" typology is never compensated for in "theory."

The convention that the Johannine group represented a more individualistic stance (weak group/low grid) than the Synoptics (strong group/low grid) is, in my opinion, questionable. Due to the limited space, Malina was not able to fully demonstrate this point. His discussion of antilanguage and counterlanguage was, in this regard, a problem. Halliday's position on antilanguage is difficult to understand from the counter group language. Two potentially helpful interlocutors might be Georg Simmel and George Gurwitsch. The distinction between antilanguage and counterlanguage is rooted in the style of conflict the group perceives itself in relation to a broader community. For instance, the strong group/low grid community is one that perceives that the other group has become renegade and lost the traditional values. The weak group/low grid perceives itself as renegade. The work of Gurwitsch would remind us that groups work in different dimensions: mass, community and communion. One could use antilanguage in one dimension and counterlanguage when the same community is addressing another group in the same religious community. Thus the same group can use two different types of language depending on the audience. This raises the question of the limits to sociolinguistics in a group that speaks in different ways at different times and to different groups.

One will immediately realize that the issue of perception highlighted in the work of George Herbert Mead will change the understanding of the importance of perception in the social interaction. One must take into account the perception of the community that may have little to do with the way we would construe the plight of any given group today.

The discussion of antilanguage as "relexicalization," overlexicalization and metaphorical is intriguing. Malina, making use of the work of Halliday, has argued that the community of the Gospel of John uses these three. However, we find that this way of speech is typical of higher education. One is reminded of the work of theologians such as Paul Tillich and philosophers such as Martin Heidegger to name a few that make use of "relexicalization" and "overlexicalization..." In this case we find that the community of the Gospel of John looks very much like us scholars. Further, there is the emphasis on metaphorical language as opposed to regular speech. While there may be some agreement that the Gospel of John has a predilection for metaphorical language, we must note the fact that this language is construed as Scripture. For a large community keeps it from being "regular speech," and, as such, it is imbued with a metaphorical quality implicitly.

Let me close by saying how much I appreciated this paper. I am not a New Testament scholar and therefore hesitate to comment on the most precise issues of interpretation of the Gospel of John and have tried to focus on the use of sociological theory and sociolinguistics in the analysis of biblical material.



Response by Dr. Herman C. Waetjen, *Robert S. Dollar Professor of New Testament  
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Limitations of time, at the moment, prevent the undertaking of a more comprehensive critique. This response, therefore, will be limited to a hermeneutical question which Malina's paper raises for me. A sociolinguistic principle serves as Malina's point of departure; "...what persons talk about is meaningful to their conversation partners not so much because these partners do not know what a speaker (or writer) is going to say but because the partners do know." And, "...members of various social groups can predict the types of meaning that might be exchanged from the situations in which speaking takes place." Of course, Malina is not an original conversation partner of the Fourth Evangelist, but this sociolinguistic principle appears to have served him in locating the appropriate type of matrix of the Fourth Gospel within the grid and group model of Mary Douglas. That is, a prior or preliminary understanding of this text has led him to identify the Fourth Gospel with the "Weak Group/Low Grid" and to contend that "John would be presenting his audience with the story of Jesus... with a romantic tragedy mode of emplotment, developing an implicit formist argument and with an anarchic ideology."

But what has determined that prior understanding of the Fourth Gospel? And how is its validity to be measured? An inadequate preunderstanding will lead to an incorrect or an inappropriate grid identification, and consequently, the hermeneutical circle that continues will be misdirected.

It may be that none of the grids are appropriate for a location of the Fourth Gospel. But the "Weak Group/Low Grid" configuration which Malina chooses does not appear to be valid. Although Jesus is a unique individual whose heroic style of ministry introduces new conditions and releases new forces, his self-identification as "the Son of the Human Being" is implicitly corporate as well as explicitly individual. His initial radical act of "Temple Cleansing" is aimed at replacing the naon of the Temple with a living House of God (2:21) that is destined to become cosmic in its incorporation of all humanity and its attendant (but transformed) socio-economic structures and institutions (14:1-3). The dramatic use of ego eimi, echoing Yahweh's self-identification in Exodus 3 is not limited to Jesus alone. Its employment by the blind man whose eyes have been opened and who begins to take responsibility for his seeing indicates that it is intended to be a common self-identification voiced by all who are incorporated into the community of the New Human Being and linking them directly to its originator and founder, the incarnate Word.

In other words, throughout the Fourth Gospel, Jesus continuously acts and speaks as the reality of "The One and the Many." Any claims which he makes for himself are essentially egalitarian and are to be appropriated by his followers. He is only the beginning of a new humanity, and those who join him in participating in it are in fact destined to surpass his achievements (14:12).

What Jesus transcends and concomitantly what his disciples transcend (17:14-16) is not the empirical world of experience but the alienated world (cosmos) that lies in darkness because they have been "born from above" (3:3-8). The activity of "world reconstruction" is accompanied by "world destruction." Jesus subverts the systemic structure of the Temple and its

attendant pollution system while he simultaneously works for the dispossession of the ruling elite who are engaged in "world maintenance" for the continuation of their own hierarchical power and privilege. The evangelist's story of Jesus shows that the oppressive conditions of the world are alterable, but only through incorporation into and active participation in the new reality of "The One and the Many," namely, "The Son of the Human Being," the new humanity which the Creator has generated. Jesus's signs, which unveil the power, glory and autonomy of this new humanity as it grows and expands, point forward to their actualization in the culminating events of death and resurrection.

Supposing that this preliminary understanding of the Fourth Gospel is valid, what is the appropriate grid identification? Perhaps, like the Synoptics, the Fourth Gospel is to be classified in the "Strong Group/Low Grid." Although the name of the literary type that this grid involves, "satiric tragedy," may be inadequate, the narrative discloses the qualities that characterize its distinctive mode of emplotment, formal argument and ideological implication.

Since prior understanding of the Fourth Gospel is so decisive in determining which grid is to be chosen, how can its validity (that of one's prior understanding) be predetermined? Where do I make a happy entry into the hermeneutical circle that will enable me to recover both a reconstruction of the original socio-economic framework of the text and a comprehension of the original conversation that was intended to be generated by the text?



## MINUTES OF THE COLLOQUY OF 11 MARCH 1984

## List of Participants

Professor at *Creighton University*Bruce J. Malina (*Biblical Studies*)Professors at the *University of California, Berkeley*E. A. Judge (*Classic and History*)Charles E. Murgia (*Classics*)Professors at the *Graduate Theological Union*L. William Countryman (*New Testament*)William Herzog II (*New Testament*)Stephen Breck Reid (*Old Testament*)David Stagaman (*Systematic Theology*)Herman C. Waetjen (*New Testament*)Antoinette Wire (*New Testament*)Wilhelm Wuellner (*New Testament*)Professors at the *University of San Francisco*Marvin Brown (*Philosophy*)John H. Elliott (*Theology and Religious Studies*)

## Students

Chad Myers

K. M. Irwin

## Guests

Vernon Fallettaz (*Visiting Scholar, Biblical Studies*)Anitra Bingham Kolenkow (*New Testament*)

## Recorder

Brigid Merriman, OSF

## EIGHT TYPES OF INTELLIGENCE

Doing: Sensing Reality by Doing  
Receptive

- Detail: something is  
focus on details: that-knowledge
- suspend judgement and avoid pre-conceptions
  - attentive to detail and exact attributes of data
  - insist on a complete examination of data set before making any conclusion

kinesthetic-bodily  
interpersonal

mechanistic  
logico-mathematical

Thinking  
Systematic

- Logic: what is it  
focus on technique: how knowledge
- look for method and make a plan for solving problem
  - very conscious of approach
  - defend quality of solution in terms of method
  - define constraints of problem early
  - proceed with increasing refinement of analysis
  - conduct ordered search for additional information
  - complete discrete steps in analysis that is begun

Feeling Group Maintenance  
Perceptive

- Values: what is it worth  
focus on valuation: why-purpose knowledge
- look for cues in a data set
  - focus on relationships
  - jump from one section of data to another, building a set of explanatory precepts

Making Associations for New Insights  
Intuitive

- Overview: what may be  
focus on big picture: why-knowledge
- keep overall problem continuously in mind
  - redefine problem frequently in the process
  - defend solution in terms of fit
  - rely on un verbalized cues
  - deal with alternatives and options simultaneously
  - jump from one step of analysis or search to another and back again
  - explore and abandon alternatives very quickly

linguistic  
spatial

musico-temporal  
intrapersonal

Figure 4. The McKenney Model of Cognitive Styles.

## Minutes of the Colloquy of 11 March 1984

Waetjen: A very warm welcome to Bruce Malina, and a hearty thanks for his stimulating paper. We shall ask him to open the discussion.

Malina: I am happy to be here this evening. By way of introduction to my observations, I thought it would be helpful to underline many of the implicit presuppositions I have drawn upon in the preparation of my paper and its models, specifically those from experimental psychology. Since getting into the field of the social sciences for biblical interpretation, I learned almost from the beginning about George Miller's articulation of the magic law of seven plus/minus two,<sup>1</sup> hence that abstract models should not have more than nine parts to be usable.

The second thing I learned of use here was of the development of language in children from experimental linguistics and sociolinguistics from Michael A. K. Halliday.<sup>2</sup> Then I learned about reading theory from Sanford and Garrod.<sup>3</sup> These are all sources of information that are quite important for interpretation, especially of written texts. Furthermore, another area about which I have learned most recently is contemporary work on what is variously called cognitive communication or learning styles.

By way of preface to the discussion, then, I offer you this chart (see figure 4). It presents simply one form of mapping out communication or learning styles, a simplified variant of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator. This particular model is called the McKenney Model of cognitive styles.<sup>4</sup> McKenney applies some dimensions of the Meyers-Briggs scheme.<sup>5</sup> The purpose of the model here is to situate myself relative to those who have critiqued my paper and vice-versa, from the point of view of cognitive styles, styles of writing and talking about things. For those who are not big picture persons - intuitive style of discovering information - you suffered if you had the patience to plow through my paper. The paper is unabashedly in the intuitive, overview style as described in the chart. The opposite pole is detail - the sensing style of discovering information. It is called the doing style because such learners sense their way through reality by concretely doing things, thus generating a mass of facts; they are not very much concerned about the models they use to perform this feat. They leave the models implicit and simply churn out information. On the horizontal place to the left, there is the systematic style - emphasizing decision-making through thinking. This type of person, when given a model, processes all available information through the model without questioning the validity of the model itself. The opposite type of person - emphasizing decision through feeling in terms of value to person - is one who constantly asks about relevance. You might notice that academic gatekeepers, i.e., those who teach in graduate schools and who successfully complete graduate school, are normally in systematic and details positions - thinking and doing styles - while the rest of us, who do not occupy the lofty gatekeeper positions, are stuck at the bottom and right of the chart - intuitive and feeling positions. There are dirty words associated with each of the styles in this model. For example, the overview person will read a detail-doer's presentation and subsequently claim the writer is guilty of raw empiricism; the work is boring and highly impressionistic. On the other hand, the detail person will assess an overview essay as quite abstract, data poor and simplistic or reductionistic. The thinking-systematic dirty word, a word we have all learned in graduate school, is "unconvincing." The dirty word from the feeling pole is "irrelevant," or "impractical." People who work in the

field of cognitive styles tell us that when we write or speak in public, we are sending metamessages that are normally in the mode of our communicative style. As I mentioned, my paper is unabashedly intuitive-overview. Professor Judge's criticism is unabashedly receptive: detail-doer with a secondary thinking - systematic - back up. Further, I think that Professor Waetjen's critique is systematic, secondarily detail-doer, and similarly Professor Reid's. People utilizing this sort of learning style model offer the following analogy: a person's use of the four models of relating to and communicating about reality is somewhat similar to a TV set which is regularly outfitted with four channels. Reception is excellent on the first channel, good on the second, indifferent on the third and poor on the fourth. In time, one would find oneself using the first and second channels while avoiding the third and especially the fourth. Certainly, everyone is capable of understanding in all four styles; but, each person has a strong suit, a back up, a third that is used only with effort and clumsily, and a fourth that most often does not work when one tries to use it.<sup>6</sup>

With these prefatory remarks, I offer a critique of my "critiquers." Professor Judge's critique tends to be psychologistic; he has difficulty dealing with social units in the abstract. As a result, I hear him saying I am not doing the details; I am doing big picture abstraction which cannot be tested. He has difficulty with note 2 of my paper, the one referring to the work of Rene Thom: the "fact" that in a four dimensional perspective, human beings can perceive only eight shapes. Judge wants to know how one can prove that. I cannot; one has to read Rene Thom. as far as my presuppositions in approaching John, I would like to get rid of the model of the hermeneutical circle. I would replace it with the hermeneutical routine and subroutine, terms taken from computer science. In my second note I quote from Miller and Johnson-Laird and their experimental work dealing with how human beings do process information with the speed of electricity. In an individual, different inputs within differing perspectives, taken in one after another and then serving as comparative routines and subroutines, the outputs of which are articulated in the models presented.

My last point. While working through the information provided by John in terms of the models, I did not know what conclusions might emerge. The surprising outcome, to me at least, may be found in the sentence on page 17; after going through John and his antilanguage, what emerges is the conclusion: "...that such propositions (in John) do not function as meaning bearing language in the semantic system of regular language, even the regular 'religious' language of contemporary early Christianity and Judaism. It is quite significant to note that there are no such sentences in the writings of Paul or the other gospels and the non-Johannine New Testament documents." To me this was a surprising conclusion, arrived at just by using Halliday's sociolinguistics model. Of course, the question for scriptural study, for theology, is: Is John really talking about a reality witnessed by somebody in the first century, or is he talking in an antilanguage, wishing reality were the way he describes it?

Waetjen: Any responses from those who critiqued Professor Malina's paper?

Judge: Mr. Chairman, I am not against the models which Bruce Malina is attempting to use at all. The criticism I wanted to bring forward was that the models must be found to be applicable to ancient writings and to people living in the ancient world. I say this because Malina himself has well demonstrated the value of it in his book, The New Testament World. There are,

of course, anthropologists who have remarkably illuminated the ancient world by bringing to it models which are demonstrably applicable to ancient culture.<sup>7</sup> The trouble, of course, is that the models are projections of our own minds, and we know that. How are we to know whether or not a model is applicable? In my critique, I dealt particularly with Mary Douglas's grid-group model and also with the Halliday one. I want now to say something about Hayden White's metahistorical system, in order to stress what Hayden White himself emphasizes.

I do not know whether the four interpretative strategies I have identified exhaust all the possibilities contained in language or the representation of historical phenomena. But I do claim that my typology of interpretative strategies permits me to account for the prestige enjoyed by historians and philosophers of history during different periods of nineteenth century thought, and among different publics within a given period of that thought. (see *Metahistory*, p. 429).

Hayden White was concerned with the particular epoch of nineteenth century thought. The strength of his book was that he demonstrated the common presuppositions both in the working historians and in those who philosophized about their work in that particular epoch that lay between the enlightenment historians like Gibbon and the reversion to their position which began to occur at the end of the nineteenth century, Burckhardt's work, and he rightly demonstrates as now the standard currency of historical writing and which he calls the ironic or satirical mode. That is the style of doing history which relies on the ironic negation of one's apparent conclusions and so on because of the uncertainty that prevails among historians with the failure of nineteenth century historicism.

Hayden White was concerned, then, with a set of philosophical and methodological problems thrown up in response to the modern enlightenment, and he did not pretend that he was talking about anything more than that. When he took up Northrop Frye's fourfold aesthetic typology - romantic, tragic, comic, satirical - he recognized that there would be other modes of emplotment as well.<sup>8</sup> He quoted the example of the epic. Similarly, when he took up Karl Mannheim's fourfold ethical typology, which is called the "mode of ideological implication," he recognized that there would be other kinds of implications in other epochs, or even in our own time. He quotes as examples apocalypticism, or the reactionary approach to the world, or fascism, all of which he saw in essence as authoritarian, and in his terms, therefore, not cognitively responsible.<sup>9</sup> That is, they did not accept the responsibility for their own methodology of understanding what the world was like. I put it to you that anybody reading the New Testament is not going to look under the headings anarchist, radical, conservative or liberal if he is offered apocalyptic to look under as well. There is something to my mind unreal about a typology which wants to locate the gospel of John in the same box with Niebuhr, the Roman historian, who falls in the anarchist zone in Hayden White's work, or Michelet or Nietzsche.

But then, how do we profit from this kind of exercise? I think, myself, that it is exceedingly stimulating and profitable, provided that one can learn to see where it stops and whether or not it has encompassed the ground. I am not a student of the New Testament, but I know enough about ancient history to believe that the gospel of John is not a history, either in an ancient or a modern sense. There is something likely to be astray in

applying to it a typology derived from analyzing certain categories of nineteenth century historiography. If it were a classical history maybe there would be some mileage in it, but even Hayden White is not saying that. L. Alexander, in my view, has successfully analyzed the prologue to the third gospel and proved that it was written by somebody who believed that he was writing what we would call a technical treatise.<sup>10</sup> There is then a question - and it is one which the New Testament specialists have to answer: what kind of exercise is the gospel of John in genre terms? If it does not turn out to be a history, it is not clear to me how applicable a typology is that is designed to analyze historical modes of explanation.

Waetjen: A question which I would like to address to Professor Malina concerns the paper which he has handed out on McKenny's model of cognitive styles. Do you think that meaningful dialogue is possible among these four cognitive styles and whether any critique from another cognitive style other than your own would be extrinsic or intrinsic?

Malina: The main value in cognitive style awareness, about which people speak in business and education is that the best approach to anything is the team approach. People of different styles can, in fact, learn to listen to each other.<sup>11</sup> Secondly, they can learn to listen to metamessages and not get bogged down by detouring details. Attention to the metamessage is the specific way to have people appreciate things and listen to what the other person is saying. For example, I greatly benefit from people who dredge up details; my contribution consists in running such data through models to see what they might mean.

Waetjen: We can open up the discussion to everyone now.

Murgia: Professor Malina, I am not quite sure what you mean in your paper by determining the social placement from analyzing a work. Clearly you do not believe that because John has a particular group/grid relationship that therefore the society for which he wrote has that same relationship. He is different in his group/grid. You give clues in your paper that you think you fit into a weak group/high grid. If I were to analyze what I am now saying, I suppose that from the frequency of I's which I am pronouncing, I would consider myself weak group/low grid. I have to be low grid because I am critiquing you. This does not have to do with our society, but with the relationship of someone giving critique. Yet, we are all talking to the same group within the same society. The fact that I speak this way, and the fact that you have written in a certain way is not actually telling us anything about the society which we are addressing. I suggest that what it is telling us about is the role which we have been assigned or have chosen within this particular society. I would suggest that almost any position paper is going to be a weak group/high grid, or at least, high grid. Then, it is the task of us around this room to criticize you; we are bound to take a different tack and, most likely, an opposite attack, in order to crystallize this criticism. I am not quite sure what you are saying in a social way when you classify John.

Malina: The way you used the model just now is the way one is not supposed to use it. It is meant to be a social model, not an individualistic, psychological model. Mary Douglas has a psychological essay - "In the Nature of Things" - in which she charts three people through the quadrants; this is in her book, Implicit Meanings, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975, pages 210-229. And Sheldon R. Isenberg has one on Paul in the SBL Seminar Papers.<sup>12</sup>

These essays show that when one considers an individual person, the path traced over the chart moves just as the one you indicated, all around the board.

Murgia: I am talking of the person of John.

Malina: I am considering John as a collectivity that can resonate with the information set out in John. I am not concerned with the individual author of John, with that author's psychological, individual intention. My point of view leads me to ask: given John's social location, what structures and values might emerge from such a story as told in John. I am not interested, in the first instance, as to whether or not John is an historian. I believe that historians and storytellers are, abstractly put, quite the same, and John is telling a story. I do not care how you might wish to label the story. Given John's plot line, the author of the gospel is talking in a way that is typical of weak group/low grid. On the other hand, to be fair to Professor Judge, I really need four more quadrants on the chart. In a book at the publisher's right now, I have all eight.<sup>13</sup> But, from George Miller's "Seven Plus or Minus Two" rule, if people have trouble with a model with more than seven parts, they will not bother with a larger one, since it will prove too boring. They will drop the model rather than sit and work it through, just as is the case with models of synoptic relations. Each person has to work out his or her own system, and when that system is presented to others, they cannot make sense out of it simply because there are too many disparate elements involved. In the models presented in my essay, I offer four elements because four are sufficient. For unusual events such as apocalyptic, a place can be made for it at the strong-strong group/low-low grid position, if anyone is interested. A difficulty people have in using Mary Douglas's grid/group model is that she keeps on changing. If one has an intuitive, overview cognitive style, one will take the model and decide now to use it for one's own purpose without worrying about whether Douglas would approve or not.

Murgia: Then how do you know that you are not using it wrongly - just as I was using it wrongly?

Malina: There is no right and wrong use, actually. I am not saying you are using it wrongly; you are using it psychologically. You may use it in that way, but it does not yield anything significant psychologically.

Murgia: I was putting it to a test. Can I say that when I examine something on the basis of this grid, that I am finding something out about the society? I have determined that in this particular instance I am not finding out anything about the society. Then how do we know that is not true of John, too? What is your test that you are finding out something sociological rather than psychological? I would think that you can not do it on the basis of a single author, but that you need a whole complex of authors.

Malina: You do, eventually. The model is the tip of the iceberg for a whole range of information. However, what the social sciences look to is the social structure that everyone agrees upon and values, that use the structures in order to be implemented. This is the social science jargon which I do not want to overdo here. If you start with the big picture presupposition that every human group, in order to survive in a human way, has to adapt to its environment in some socially organized, meaningful way,



you will have four basic social institutions. These include the structures of kinship, adaptation, power and ideology or meaning. At a lower level of abstraction, concrete families, economic units, governing bodies and modes of explanation serve as the concrete realization and embodiment of distinctive values. What I look for in weak group collectivities is concern with values; in a strong group, concern with structures. Both weak group and strong group collectivities have values and structures, but each emphasizes them quite differently. Weak group people focus upon values all the time; in weak group/low grid, everyone fights about values, being against the values of the quadrants from which they come - as in John. Strong group/low grid is always in conflict about structures; people there seek a transformation of structures. To me, this latter is typical of the Synoptics. What I would hope to discover, using the grid/group model, is the following: given this concrete group of people, if they are to maintain themselves as a group, what sort of structures are they likely to need to realize the values they hold. I would stay at the level of people and the groups they comprise. However, there is another way to do such as analysis that is really more consistent with social analysis, yet it is not much used at all. That is, to talk only about social structures and social values, not about people. However, such talk is eminently boring, so one normally talks about what people do when they are together.

But Michel Verdon has three articles in which he says we ought never talk about individual persons when doing social sciences since reference to persons leads to confusion with psychology. One ought to keep the linguistic register at the level of the social unit, institution or value.<sup>14</sup> Thus, in the case of the social analysis of John, it is not an individual person but the collectivity, the author-audience called John. And, in the analysis of the structure of the story called John, John does not refer to an individual person.

Murgia: You went on to suggest that perhaps there was a change in John in the letters. I am wondering if the change might not be simply a change in genre. Is it really legitimate to take an author and say that in one case he belongs to one classification and in another to a second classification, and therefore, he has changed his social placement?

Malina: I do not want to deal with an author. That is the problem. I would like to deal with that aspect of the work that entails author and audience. I want to know how people come together and stay held together in what they believe.

Judge: The trouble is that you are inventing the audience, because you do not know who they were, and your way of guessing who they were is to talk about them resonating with John. What do you mean by that?

Malina: They understand John.

Judge: Perhaps they do not understand John. The only evidence we have that anybody resonated with him, is that we still have the text.

Malina: That is true, and people still resonate with it.

Murgia: The same people who decided that this could be a canonical gospel decided that the synoptic gospels should also be canonical. If you were to make any conclusions based on their acceptance, it would be a contradiction.

Malina: Good. That is precisely the type of conclusion I am looking for. Groups that survive are those which have "sociological ambivalence" or normative inconsistency. Groups that get rid of all inconsistency normally vanish. It is a very interesting thesis which I will pursue in tomorrow's talk.<sup>15</sup>

Murgia: To give an example of somebody for whom we could reconstruct the social system, I mention the poetry of Catullus who composed both lyric poetry and the small epic. We can have an idea of the society for whom he was composing, and yet, if one were to try to classify lyric poetry and epic, I think that one would be forced to come up with different group/grid relationships, simply by the fact of the shift in genre. Yet, it is the same person composing for the same society. Thus, I would say that genre is independent of the social system.

Malina: I would answer that genre is located in the social system.

Murgia: I could conceive of your saying that genre is determined by social system in the case where, in one period of time, say, the epic dominates, in another period of time, the tragedy dominates. But it does not work when you get to Roman literature and you find that all kinds of literature exist simultaneously because of historical influences, not because of the society in which they are writing right now, but simply the culture they inherited or the reaction to the culture they inherited.

Malina: Why is the culture they inherited not a part of the social system?

Murgia: In a way, it is. I would say, though, that if you use these grids to deduce the social system, you can come up with wrong conclusions.

Malina: Only if you use the models monothetically, since all the elements have to be included. But, if you use them polythetically, you can get a decent social location and a comparative perspective. All that I am after in this essay is the comparative perspective and distancing that the model allows one to have. The model entails a very high level of abstraction, hence it focuses on similarities. To use this kind of model, one has to prescind from very interesting differences. The better models are mid-range models. They are easier for people in a range of learning styles to handle.

Wire: I would like to pick up one of the later comments in Judge's paper about whether or not you are dealing with situation or mental direction. I agree with Judge to some extent that, it seems to me, what we can tell from reading someone like John is the direction in which he is trying to move a group that he is addressing, rather than where the group is, so to speak, in terms of social structure. I discovered this in the context of a class where we were trying to use the Mary Douglas model. What we found out was that it was very hard to determine where some of the New Testament documents were. What we found was that it was impossible to tell what direction the author was trying to move the group - whether he was trying to tighten or loosen the grid, for example - but to tell where it is is much more difficult. I wondered if this might be usable in terms of your own categories and, borrowing something from J. Elliot who speaks about strategy in his discussion of First Peter, if we could use the word strategy of the writer rather than the social situation, per se. You can often chart the social strategy in what the writer keeps trying to do or what social angle he is trying to push. Do you see that as something useful? You seem to identify

the author and the people he is addressing in the same corner of the grid, whereas I would find that the Johannine group may have been catapulted into low group/low grid, by the expulsion from synagogue and so on, but that the author is trying to tighten the group in various ways. That is what I read in the document, rather than where the group actually is. Can you respond to some of that?

Malina: One of my purposes in writing the paper is to take off from the generalizations set out in Halliday's essay, which is an interesting one on antilanguage and antisociety. He offers many examples of antilanguage from such antisocieties as the underworld, prison experiences, concentration camps and adolescence. He notes that the characteristics of antilanguage pertain to the whole New Testament. After seeing all the characteristics of antilanguage, i.e., after I went through the model, it always struck me that in reading John, John had these characteristics to the nth degree. My next question was: where does antisociety, and John with it, fit into the grid/group model? As for what John's intention might be, you may be correct in saying that his intention or mental direction is to get at the boundaries, to make them stronger, to move folks along in that way. That is possible, but I did not look at that perspective. All I tried to do was run data from John through the models and to be controlled by the models, not my hunches, to see where that might lead. The conclusion I came up with, that John's language is not real world language, was a surprise to me. That is what I like about such models. They reveal things I would not think would be there, and they check my hunches. Some might say that a given model is no good, inadequate for a given data set. Well, I am willing to adjust, throw out or depart from any model. To me, models are all mental constructs meant to deal with the far richer objects of the real world. However, given the fact that human beings begin to understand in terms of similarities and differences, sooner or later we will have to articulate where we are coming from, although not all cognitive styles feel the need. People say that something is "convincing" or "not convincing." But that only means that if I do not follow their model, my conclusions are "not convincing," while if I do, my argument is "convincing." Yet, such an assessment, based on implicit models, does not tell me how much judgements and their outcomes relate to the task of textual interpretation. A "convincing" argument or conclusion merely says one followed a preordained model or set of rules; it says nothing of the validity of the model or set of rules. Hence, I agree with you. You may use the model the way you describe. But, I did not address it or look at it that way.

Elliott: Professor Waetjen, in his response, questions the weak group/low grid location of the Johannine community and maintains that the Fourth Gospel stresses the "corporate" identity of "the Son of the Human Being" and "the common self-identification" of those "incorporated into the community of the New Human Being." This concern with corporate group identity, however, is not necessarily incompatible with Malina's identification of the group's social location, namely a fragmented group of individuals excluded and isolated from the larger community. For it is just this condition of social fragmentation and isolation which would motivate a group in the interest of survival to concentrate on aspects of internal group identity and cohesion and thus attempt to move from the location of weak group/low grid to the location of strong group/low grid. Thus Malina's model would identify where the Johannine group sees itself and Waetjen's point, the direction in which the author of the Fourth Gospel sees it essential to move.

Malina: Ah, yes.

Faillettaz: Would you say again what overall problem the paper addressed?

Malina: The problem is the social location of people to whom the gospel of John is addressed. I do not think that John's gospel would make sense to weak group/low grid people in the Christian tradition.

Faillettaz: Then the question is: to whom does it make sense?

Malina: I would say: to whom does it make sense in terms of sociolinguistics. Who would be in an antisociety in the first century? My conclusion bolsters the work of people who say John's community consists of persons recently kicked out of some other group. They make this conclusion intuitively, like Raymond Brown does<sup>16</sup> - which is fine. Brown's hunches and the way he works them out with no explicit model are valid to me on the basis of the antilanguage model from sociolinguistics.

Faillettaz: Having done that experiment, what problem do you want to solve with John now?

Malina: The problem is: how seriously should we take Johannine language? In the Christian tradition, John has been read in the same key or register as the Synoptics, as though all the gospels report, in their own way, what witnesses observed to have actually happened. Now, if John is really antilanguage, then we should not be taking the aspect of witness to what actually happened that seriously. That is the problem with John, and that is exactly where my essay is leading.

Faillettaz: So here you are following people who have studied irony in John, and John as comic.

Malina: Yes, that could be.

Elliott: I live in Oakland, and most of the people in my block say that something is really "bad" when they mean that it is really "good." Here conventional language is simply inverted. Halliday is pointing out that there are certain groups which do that. If John is inverting the language, it seems to me that we should be curious as historians to determine to whom this would make sense, and to note for what purposes people invert language, and nevertheless communicate meaningfully with one another. I see your point, but am differentiating language the way John uses it on the one hand, and the way other people in another quadrant may be using it for different purposes. If you take the language of the Synoptics literally, that is one thing. Malina is right, however; if the language of John is antilanguage generated by antisociety, then can you take the language of John literally? Unless we were members of such an antisociety speaking antilanguage, it would not make sense to us.

Herzog: What would it mean to correlate the kinds of sociolinguistic findings which you just mentioned with some of the recent literary critical studies on John's gospel? What kind of literary strategies might we expect? What kinds of literary strategies might correlate with sociolinguistic insights you have suggested? How would the literary critical discussions of the narrator, the implied reader, the real reader, and so on, relate to what you speak of as the readers or hearers?

Malina: I follow a model on the division of linguistics from Halliday. I am going to go very abstract on you and speak of language used in three ways: aesthetically, psycholinguistically and sociolinguistically. Aesthetics has to do with structural and literary criticism of intellectual/emotive resonances in contemporary readers; psycholinguistics deals with the author's ability to perform in his language, in this case, to use Greek; and sociolinguistics refers to the question of the sort of community in which a given type of language makes sense. You are asking, on the basis of the few things I have said here about sociolinguistics, what would be the aesthetic linguistic dimension that would best fit this situation? That is the way I understand the question, and it makes sense. In the first place, I have theoretical difficulty with French structuralism, so I am not going to use that approach. Instead, I will use the story line approach, for example, that of Rhoads and Michie.<sup>17</sup> In their work, Rhoads and Michie talk about standard categories of thought - who, what, where, etc. - of the author's setting in the work, and the like. I would use the usual observation about how the story moves from equilibrium to disequilibrium to transformed equilibrium, which is the standard plot line of any story. The main vehicles for the plot line in John are the elements I mentioned in the essay: misunderstanding, dialogue becoming monologue, the quality of signs, and sequence of signs. I would like to correlate these points, if I were doing such a study, with archeology and the places where the Johannine signs supposedly take place. John seems to be relating to these sorts of things on multiple levels. I would then ask why John has the particular emphases I pointed out previously and which Halliday tells me are normal to antilanguage, i.e., emphasis on conversation, on the second and first person singular personal pronoun, on puns and on multiple level punning. People who do traditional exegesis tell us that John puns in both Greek and Aramaic, and perhaps also in Hebrew. I think they are correct, if only because punning is a perfect sign of antilanguage. I do not know if this answers your question.

Wire: I have a question on the overlexicalization which seems to be a characteristic of this antilanguage, as you say. I wonder if that is an adequate description of John. John seems to have relatively few words for things. For instance, "bread" does not become "barley," then "loaves," and then "wheat." There is not a lot of distinction, just the standard words. Some are very abstract words, such as light and life. We find a rather smaller vocabulary than we might expect if someone were talking about real life. It is abstract and maybe symbolic, but I wonder whether we can say that it is metaphorical. Rather than a surprising new metaphor that suddenly reveals the relationship of one thing to another, we find a few standard symbols that are abstract and used repeatedly. As you know, if you want to learn a language that you do not know, it is always good to read John because the lexicalization is so simple. Does the term overlexicalization fit John?

Malina: I think that the examples I gave fit. Overlexicalization, for Halliday, refers to the fact that the same thing is referred to with many different words by people in an antisociety. They do not overlexicalize everything, but only the center of their concerns. John is really concerned about the difference between those who form his collectivity, those who have been kicked out, and those who kicked them out. That is enough to overlexicalize that area only.

Wire: So Jesus's identity, as a kind of a focal identity for a new

understanding of the group, is what gets all the titles?

Malina: Especially relationship to Jesus and where people stand in that relationship.

Wuellner: Do you make a distinction in your mind between the social location and the economic location?

Malina: No, the economic is a part of the social.

Wuellner: Given your understanding of Mediterranean society, you cannot discern whether or not its literary manifestation in John requires a culturally defined group with a high level of sophistication. By contrast, Lausberg's first major essay on John<sup>18</sup> argued that overlexicalizations - and other linguistic features - in John requires a sociology of knowledge level of high sophistication: educated people, not the hoi polloi, but an elite group. Elite is understood in a cultural economic sense rather than as you proposed outcast antigroup which could be taken as economic underdog.

Malina: I have difficulty with that because people who overlexicalize, in concentration camps, for example, may be very intelligent and may have been wealthy before they got there. I would say that wealth is connected with social location in this sense. I do not know if you can conclude anything from that alone.

Wuellner: The hazardous implications of your work may add one more bit of alleged evidence of Christianity's low social origin.

Malina: It is neither low nor high. It is simply kicked out.

Waetjen: Suppose that you could establish from the text that the people were not kicked out. You quote John 20:31, "in order that they may continue to believe." This means that you consider the present subjunctive to be the original text, but there is an alternate reading which uses the aorist subjunctive. Suppose that I were to insist that the aorist subjunctive was the original verb which the evangelist used, and that it would imply a non-Christian audience. In fact, the writer may be very unique among the evangelists by attempting to bring about a conversion on the part of the people he is addressing. They are not outcasts at all! This is not an anti-community! This is not an antilanguage that is being used! To use Professor Wuellner's terms, these are a highly educated elite, people who can deal with abstract concepts like logos and similar terms. You would have to start all over again with your grid in that case, would you not?

Malina: First I would ask: what kind of language is this? If it is not antilanguage, how will it function? And if it is not overlexicalization, if indeed each word refers to something different, what does each focus upon that is different? On boundary definition, I would ask whether something referred to is inside or outside. Then I would ask where they might fit in within a system of lines. The difficulty we have with John is that there are no exorcisms, hence John is not strong group/low grid. Strong group/low grid finds demons all over the place. The fact that John does not bother with these things tells me that somehow his group is not down in that particular corner of the chart. Nor is the group apocalyptic since apocalyptic groups fall within the strong-strong group/low-low grid location. This sort of information just tells me that John has to be



someplace other than strong group/low grid.

Judge: Why do they have to be Jews? Are they not kicked out by them?

Malina: They do not have to be.

Kolenko: How do you relate alternative explanations for the "I am" sayings to the sociological ones? I am thinking of the history of religious material, particularly the Isis material, where a divine figure speaks in terms of "I" or the magician who also speaks of becoming divine or of taking on the divine persona.

Malina: I am using a sociolinguistic model, so I make the strongest case possible for the model. Besides, I collect everything I can from the whole gospel to process through the model, not just the "I am" sayings. As for the "I am" sayings, if you take such sayings as used by a magician or a goddess and process that information through a sociolinguistic model, it would seem that the person uttering an "I am" saying seeks to be the focal point of the faction. To the best of my knowledge, faction formation is typical of strong group/low grid groups, which are much concerned about coalitions. "Coalition" is the general name for groupings such as cliques, gangs, action-sets and factions.<sup>19</sup> The "I am" person who invites others is the faction founder in strong group/low grid, a person setting up or maintaining some competing group. That there were groups competing with Johannine Christianity is indicated by the Johannine letters. However, I am concerned here with bigger models. Simple "I am" instances from magicians or divine figures are insufficient for my purposes since they are not amenable to being treated in a bigger model as are the data of John. Thus, if I cannot fit loose "I am" sayings into a bigger model, I will wait until I get more material to allow for some generalization.

Elliott: I would like to pick up again on Professor Waetjen's disagreement with Malina concerning the location of John according to the Mary Douglas grid/group model. A thing that occurred to me was that if you are going to use this kind of model, one would have to use all of the indicators that she has listed here, namely, purity, rite, personal identity, body, sin, cosmology, suffering and misfortune - page 5 - and whatever other indicators we would think would be necessary to complete a social picture of the community for each of these quadrants. If we talked about just one category, like purity, or body, or sin, rather than develop a cumulative picture, I do not think we would be exploiting the utility of the model. In other words, it seems to me that in each group there would be a coherence that would be reflected in how the group thinks about purity, and so on.

In some of our exegesis we focus on one aspect of the six, and then try to describe Matthew, Mark or Luke, or John, or any of the other documents without paying attention to the others, with the result that we do not get a complete social picture. What such a model requires us to do is to take the dominant characteristics of a document and ask how together those dominant characteristics would define a community and so enable an author or authorial group to make sense. I would ask whether these are sufficient, or whether we should add further characteristics for the given communities.

Malina: Mary Douglas has many more in her newer work: cooking, gardening, hair length, and so on.<sup>20</sup>

Stagaman: My particular question is on the issue of antilanguage and the examples that you cited: people who are in prison, or in a concentration camp. What would that lead you to say about the Johannine community? What I recall about R. Brown's book is that while he pretty much assumes that these people have been kicked out of the synagogue, they have gone off and formed their own community, and they are in control of it and are very negative about what has happened to them. When you talk about antilanguage in this sense, what evidence would you find in the gospel? I would expect that you would have some explicit references to the oppressor. In other words, they are literally on the outside of the synagogue. Do you find that evidence in the gospel?

Malina: I do not find it in the gospel, but the existence of an oppressor flows from my model. I do not believe, however, that John had a community. I call John's group a collectivity of people who were recently kicked out. These people relate to Jesus as individuals, which point I find unique in the New Testament. In other gospels, it is always communities that relate to Jesus, and those writings have community maintenance as very explicit agenda items. So I would not call John's group a community, but the collectivity or congregation of the beloved disciple.

Stagaman: Would that lead you, then, to suspect that these kinds of standard things that are trying to locate the Johannine community - they have gone off to such and such a place - really are not valid? Are we rather dealing with a group prior to that next step of community formation? A group that simply has been kicked out and would like to get back in? That would be the point of the antilanguage, would it not?

Malina: Yes, and a point I simply threw out a little while ago is that the Johannine letters point to an author who would like this sort of community building to take place. When read in this context, 3rd John indicates to me that Diotrephes simply wants nothing to do with those folks of the Johannine tradition; he does not want their community; he just wants them to leave him and his community alone.

Brown: Would you extend that a bit further and say something about the social location of canonization? In other words, that John was included with the synoptics in the New Testament. Particularly, in the light of its antilanguage, how would it become a part of the establishment?

Malina: You would have to give me a specific historical period. I would say that at the time of Constantine and afterward, John is read as though it were written as the valid witness of people who actually observed the events reported. Canonization is a process that is always strong group/low grid. It implies a group of people who need a norm in face of a dropping grid, who need boundaries bolstered. Two or three hundred years ago, John was read ahistorically, without the nuances of a sense of history, anachronistically. People then read John as though it provided the same witness value in the same context as the Synoptics. All the gospels were taken with equal seriousness and used as norm against whatever deviation. In sum, for me the social location of the process of canonization is strong group/low grid.

Countryman: In this discussion of language as antilanguage, I am wondering if one is to read John in that way or whether it would be more likely that the language to which this is the antilanguage is not Jewish but Christian. That would indicate that this is a group expelled not by Jews from the

Jewish community, but by Christians from the Christian community.

Malina: It can be read that way. It would be very interesting to work all that out and see what it might mean.

Wire: Do you mean that the aposynagogoi are people who have been cast out from a Christian group?

Countryman: I should think that would be quite possible. As we know from an inscription later on, if the Marcionites could have a "synagogue," I suppose that anybody could have it.

Judge: I agree with what Countryman says. There is no reason why the community is one that is being kicked out of the synagogue at all. The fact that the gospel deals with Jesus's conflicts with the Jews may arise because that is what happened to Jesus. You may well be using that to instruct people who are having some other kind of conflict problem. The epistles do not have to come after the gospel; they could come before.<sup>21</sup>

Countryman: I wonder if Mark is not equally interpretable in terms of an antilanguage, or, at any rate, the subversive treatment of the twelve in the gospel of Mark could be seen as constituting the gospel of Mark as a kind of anti-gospel.

Waetjen: If the problem is that the disciples were incredibly stupid and never understood a thing they were told, despite Jesus's best efforts, what does that mean about the present Christian community, the community in which Mark's gospel was written. Obviously, I am being wildly speculative at this point, but I am just wondering how we decide the limits of the model.

Malina: I do not see that as antilanguage. I see it as counter-faction formation. Networking and factions are typical of the Mediterranean world.<sup>22</sup> If you study the Mediterranean world from an anthropological perspective, you find out that the anthropological method requires that you begin as far back in history as possible. I got interested in using the social sciences in biblical interpretation because there are so many Mediterranean anthropologists who ask questions of the bible and interpret it accordingly. It is from the works of these anthropologists that my own interests stem.

Failetta: Do the models help one decide what the text means to the people who relate to it?

Malina: Yes, and vice-versa. This question is related to note 2 in my essay; that note remarks how there are the equivalents of routines and subroutines in human thinking; these routines process information as quickly as the speed of electricity in a computer. You take a position and run it through; then you reverse position and run it through; the result is a sort of intuitive configuration. This is what I likened to a hermeneutical spiral previously. I think most people think this way, although they do not articulate their thinking this way.

Countryman: Often John's gospel has been treated as a mystical text and therefore as a highly privatized, individualized sort of thing. I suppose that in a sense that fits with an elite group situation. Could you expand a little on that? Is there something intrinsic about weak group for mysticism?

Malina: Are you familiar with Richard W. Coan's Hero, Artist, Sage?<sup>23</sup> The work discusses a range of heroes, self-actualizing persons, in any society and religious tradition: Judaism, Buddhism, Christianity, etc. From this book I have attempted to make a model of mystical experiences as described by Coan. The questions the model poses are: does the mystic have to transcend society or find mystical experience within oneself? It puts immanence as the weak group pole, with the strong pole as transcendence. The next question is whether a person has to be effective to be hero/heroine, for example, warrior saints. Effectiveness as requirement would point to high grid, creativity to low grid. The result is a whole typology, covering the data presented in Coan's book. Hence, I think a grid/group model of mysticism can be made, but I do not have the details with me.

Elliott: One of the problems that I see in contemporary exegesis is that we have been given a way of looking at the first century world, and we have been trained in the receptive perspective, going after details and so forth, keeping the models that we are actually using implicit, so that it is very difficult to evaluate one another's work other than to say that he or she has not given us enough detail. Yet, we are always going to disappoint someone regarding details. One of the values I see in making our implicit models explicit, is that we get our cards out on the table. We let others know what we imagine to be true of first century society. I think that we are given a great advantage in working with any kind of explicative model because it enables us to converse more specifically with one another. Then we know what we are trying to evaluate in one another's work. I just wonder why we have not done this a long time ago.

Judge: The reason for the delay was, of course, the existential hermeneutic of Bultmann, and the interest of Barth in the Word of God, which prevented the conclusions of form criticism being applied sociologically for fifty years. Now, that has finally happened.<sup>24</sup>

Myers: I am interested in the way that this sociological, anthropological approach interfaces with other anthropological approaches that have been used in New Testament work. I am thinking particularly of Brian Wilson's work. Also, Steven Reid has done work in apocalyptic literature, specifically Daniel, using Brian Wilson's seven types of religious sets. The reason I am interested in pursuing their discussion is because of some of the points made about the weak group/low grid, and some of the apocalyptic strands in Mark's gospel. Perhaps Professor Malina would like to clarify his position in relationship to that point.

Malina: As you are describing it, I would see antilanguage as weak group/low grid, while language aimed at group formation and boundary formation as strong group/low grid. Revolutions are normally strong group/low grid. We would really need the four more categories to which I alluded previously so as to include apocalyptic in strong-strong group/low-low grid. At the other extreme, a weak-weak group/low-low grid person is a hermit. I have difficulty with using Brian Wilson for biblical study, and the difficulty has to do with history. I believe that in the first century there was no free standing religion, i.e., no social institution perceivable as religion. Rather, religion was an embedded institution, just as economics and education. The only social institutions that existed as such were kinship and politics. Family or politics set the rationale for religious, economic or educational values and structures. The economic unit was, therefore, either the polity or the family at this level of analysis. Now, sect

typologies presuppose free standing religious institutions; in such contexts, sects are by definition offshoots of some religion or church, if you like. Thus, to do sect analysis one needs free standing, non-embedded religion; when religion is embedded, there are no sects, at least given the way the model is set up. I go along with Karl Polanyi who insists that before the 18th century there were no free standing economic institutions.<sup>25</sup> And, I think that Wilfred Cantwell Smith said that before Mani, no one ever conceived of a free standing religious institution; before his time religion was always embedded.<sup>26</sup> If Polanyi and Smith are correct, then in dealing with the first century, I am going to look for what we call religion in kinship groups, in polities and notably in softside polities. By a softside polity I mean the non-jural line in a group larger than a kinship group. For example, both in kinship and polity, there are jural, legal relations and non-jural, non-legal relations; the result is another fourfold model, and that is how I would work out the questions of "sects."

Reid: As I hear you talk about factionalization and as I hear Wilson talk about sects, there seems to be a great deal of overlap in the way that groups become factions and what Wilson is doing with sects. I think that one can use Wilson's categories in this fashion even though one could argue that there is no free standing religion. I think that the typology talks more about factionalization and does not have to be so wedded to sects, so that when you say that there is no free standing religion, the typology falls out in antiquity.

Malina: Yes, while you may not call it sectarian typology in the first century Mediterranean, just call it a faction typology and see how it works. The test is to see how the typology fits outside of religion.

Countryman: I wonder if it is quite true that free standing religion only comes into play with Mani. There is all the antifamily stuff that comes into the Jesus sayings and then the antimarriage material in Paul, which becomes so much stronger in the apocrypha such as the Acts of Paul. Then there is the intense antifamily quality of some of the Acts of the Martyrs, which would indicate that there was a tremendous resistance to defining religion by membership in a pre-existing family or polity.

Malina: In these examples, you have fictive kinship groups. In fictive kinship groups, people relate to each other as brothers and sisters "in Christ." This is not free standing, disembedded religion.

Judge: I would agree completely on this point that it only begins in the third century. What you are describing is the historical phenomena and ideas which led to the emergence of what we now mean by religion. The whole thing is complicated by the fact that we use a Latin word which meant something else to the Romans. By religion, we mean something that is capable of being a life commitment and a principle of organization in thinking and social affairs over against the organized society or culture in which you live. Thus, you can have the kinds of conflicts that occurred over the Manichees and then over the Christians. It was centuries before people got sorted out what was happening to their world; you can see it in the secular writers of the fourth century, in Ammianus Marcellinus, for example, struggling with the very word religio as to what is now to be made of it.

While I am talking, let me say with regard to John Elliott's point that

I agree and I am one of the people who is always demanding more data. I agree that that alone is not adequate. The trouble with the paper we have discussed is that it seems to have solved everything in one last blow, too quickly. The way forward for New Testament study, in my opinion, is to use this kind of analytical method to which I do not object in principle, but to use it in order to regulate the huge mess of data that is available. The great problem of the New Testament people, it seems to me, is that they incestuously concentrate all the time on their few texts, when there is a magnificent array of contextual material all around their texts, increasing rapidly every year.<sup>27</sup> Much of this material is very relevant to New Testament studies, but the relevance of it cannot be divined simply by looking at this bit or that bit. What is needed is some organizing principle, perhaps exactly the kind of systematic classification methods that Professor Malina is using. So, I see the future as a productive marriage between this kind of methodology and the array of data which is being supplied all the time. Simply going at it by one way or the other is manifestly defective. I do not think that Malina and I are in disagreement on this.

Malina: I do not think so.

Failetta: To have presuppositions above ground where we can see them clearly is a step forward, but I am curious about what criteria you use to assess presuppositions. Obviously there are models which you would not use. How do you decide which ones you are going to use, and which ones you are not going to use? Also, how do you decide when a model which you started to use is no longer useful?

Malina: Have some big picture people criticize your work. Then have some sociological and/or anthropological theorists do the same. Jonathan Turner, in his book on sociological theories<sup>28</sup> clearly indicates where sociologists and anthropologists are coming from theoretically. If a theoretician such as Turner says that a given model works, use it, try it out yourself and see if it works for you and your data set. If it does not, throw it out and try another.

Failetta: What do you mean - work?

Malina: Does the data set that you have get adequately covered by the model you are using? There are basically three types of models nowadays: structural-functional, conflict, and symbolic-interactional. Study through Jonathan Turner's book. He tries to present the whole field and to offer a large model to account for all the lesser models developed to explain social interaction. What Professor Judge is saying, and what I agree with, is that you need teamwork for this sort of task. Someday I hope to see a commentary on some text written by people in all four major learning styles. The people who develop social science models, including the ones I use, are people who sell products. You know that the models really work because people actually buy the products, or at least, buy the propaganda. For example, in terms of my strong group/high grid model, I predicted - for whatever it is worth to you - that as soon as the Soviets shot down the Korean Air Line plane, they would never apologize. I told this to my undergraduates and was willing to bet fifty dollars. Strong group/high grid groups just never make a mistake, and Soviet elites are such.

The models do work; they are testable in the real world. How might one



put it to a full test? There are four aspects to judge in terms of the four focuses of the cognitive styles. For example, I might propose an intuitive model, a model of what is possible and probable; you observe that there are not enough data. I would then ask you to provide more data; but then we would need someone to test the match systematically and assess the degree of fit between the model and the data. Finally, the person concerned with relevance will ask about the purpose of our enterprise at all. So we keep going; it might work and we might be able to sell products forever after. The best way to have a model work is with a team. Teamwork is normally weak group/high grid.

Brown: This is a small question about the lack of criticism built into your model. In these kinds of cognitive models which you gave us at the beginning of the evening, and how you used it, you say that all criticism could basically be discounted, because it would come from a different quadrant.

Malina: I did not say that it could be discounted. I said that you must be aware of where it is coming from. The purpose of the model is to learn how to listen to criticism.

Brown: I heard it as a discounting.

Malina: I am sorry.

Brown: That is how I hear it being used in business, as a form of capitalism without the Marxist ingredient. I wonder if this use of the models, even with New Testament studies, does lack in terms of a non-critical element, which prevents it from doing the kind of thing that J. Elliott was talking about. Does it really show the social location that makes a difference about New Testament documents or other documents? Or, in fact, does it become an academic exercise?

Malina: A model is defined as an abstract, simplified representation of a complex real world object, person or thing, which human beings develop in order to understand, to predict, to control, or all of these together. What makes models possible is that human beings think abstractly, and that happens with the onset of puberty, as a rule. People will think abstractly whether or not they like what such abstract thinking produces. I find that models themselves are neutral. It is when one places values into them that we start to skew them and use them as means to some end other than understanding. A model is simply an abstraction.

Brown: I would agree that models, or techniques, are neutral. I think that Roger Sheehan is right that technology is fundamentally ambiguous. That means it has a certain seductive power.

Malina: A model is not technology; technology is a value. Modeling is abstract thinking, the residue of the fact that one thinks abstractly.

Wuellner: Models relate to power, too, do they not? Wherever there is power, there is no neutrality.<sup>29</sup>

Stagaman: My question has to do with Mary Douglas's models. As I understand it, the real power of her models has been the fact that there was a good deal of disagreement over them. She enabled anthropologists not only to

relate what was being done all over the world, but also to discover new things in Africa, that had heretofore not been seen. I have a certain feeling from reading your paper that you are still in the process of taking a model that Douglas had developed for contemporary anthropological work and simply projecting it back into the New Testament.

Malina: Using it as a retrodictive rather than predictive tool?

Stagaman: Yes.

Malina: That is what I am doing. The only basis on which I can do it is with the help of the Thom model that claims there are eight ultimate social shapes.

Stagaman: Let me go back to your introductory remarks. If I were a structuralist, I would say that it is quite obvious to me that structuralism is replicated in biology.

Malina: It is. Structuralism is the competing school to symbolic interaction. Because structuralism is replicated in biology, Thom can say that there are eight shapes, social and biological, not one, on the basis of four dimensions of perception. In my book which will appear explaining the grid/group abstractions,<sup>30</sup> I begin with four dimensions: power, influence, inducement and commitment. The basis of these dimensions is the question: how does a person get another person to do anything? At a rather high level of abstraction, the way people can have an effect on others turns out to be either power, commitment, inducement or influence, either alone or together, either inflated or deflated. If you take these four dimensions and work them within eight social quadrants, many things can be explained rather abstractly. When you come down to the concrete level, you will need historical data to see how the abstractions were fleshed out by real people.

Stagaman: If I may ask but one more question about the issue of antilanguage. I think that some of the work of Foucault argues very much along the lines of the people you spoke of who use antilanguage in a society. There is a concentrated effort that began in the seventeenth century, that institutionalizes the people whom you would call antilanguage. Now we put them aside in prisons, so that we really do not have to face the fact that in our own society, anybody could reasonably differ from what is accepted behavior. Would you possibly see that the first century did not have this type of institutionalization, but was more free floating? They are not bounded in a way a prison community is, or the way antilanguage communities are in another society. Would that be possible?

Malina: Yes. What I am trying to say is that John, as a group of people, is embedded in some larger group. What do you do if people become obnoxious? What do you do with deviants? In a social system, just as dirt is matter out of place, so deviants are people out of social place. How do you handle people out of social place? Normally, in strong group/high grid, depending on the person's status, you would kill them; in strong group/low grid, you would exile them; in weak group/high grid, you would just move away from them because there is no way to tell the deviant anyway. Each group in its respective quadrant has some normative, implicit way of dealing with deviants, which is concretized in certain ways. There are interesting studies in labelling theory<sup>31</sup> which someone might want to adapt to biblical studies. For example, instead of speaking about the titles of Jesus, we

might call them labels of Jesus. By processing them through some recent models of labelling theory, some very interesting conclusions might be drawn.

Waetjen: Well, we started out as a strong group/high grid. I think that perhaps we have reached the weak group/low grid. It is time to terminate our session for this evening. Thank you, Professor Malina, for the stimulating discussion you and your paper have generated, and thank all of you who have joined us for this evening's colloquy.

### NOTES

1. George Miller, "The Magical Number Seven, Plus or Minus Two: Some Limits to Our Capacity for Processing Information," Psychological Review 63 (1956):81-97.
2. Michael A. K. Halliday, Language as Social Semiotic: The Social Interpretation of Language and Meaning (Baltimore: University Park Press, 1978).
3. A. J. Sanford and S. C. Garrod, Understanding Written Language: Explorations of Comprehension Beyond the Sentence (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1981).
4. James L. McKenney and Peter G. W. Keen, "How Managers' Minds Work," Harvard Business Review 52(1974):79-90.
5. Isabel Briggs Myers with Peter B. Myers, Gifts Differing, 2nd ed. (Palo Alto: Consulting Psychologists Press, 1980).
6. The example is from Thomas F. Carney, "The Four Communication Styles Approach," in The 1980 Annual Handbook for Group Facilitators, ed. J. William Pfeiffer and John E. Jones (La Jolla: University Associates, 1980), pp. 127-132.
7. A notable example is Hendrik Wagenvoort, Roman Dynamism (Oxford, 1972).
8. Hayden White, Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth Century Europe (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973), p. 7.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 23.
10. Loveday C. A. Alexander, Luke-Acts in its Contemporary Setting with Special Reference to the Prefaces, unpublished D.Phil. Dissertation. Dr. Wuellner refers me to the proposal of E. Guettgemanns, "In Welchem Sinne ist Lukas 'Historiker,'" Linguistica Biblica 54(1983):9-26.
11. For cognitive style team approaches, see Ian I. Mitroff and Ralph H. Kilman, Methodological Approaches to Social Science (San Francisco: Josey-Bass, 1978).

12. Sheldon R. Isenberg, "Some Uses and Limitations of Social Scientific Methodology in the Study of Early Christianity," in Society of Biblical Literature 1980 Seminar Papers, ed. J. Paul Achtemeier (Chico: Scholars Press, 1980):29-49.

13. Bruce Malina, Interpreting Across Cultures: Models for Understanding New Testament Meanings (Atlanta: John Knox Press, forthcoming).

14. Michel Verdon, "Descent: An Operational View," Man 15(1980):129-150; "Shaking Off the Domestic Yoke: Or the Sociological Significance of Residence," Comparative Studies in Society and History 22(1980):109-132; "Kinship, Marriage and the Family: An Operational Approach," American Journal of Sociology 86(1980):796-818; see also his "Durkheim and Aristotle: Of Some Incongruous Congruences," Studies in History and Philosophy of Science 13(1982):333-352.

15. Bruce Malina, "Normative Dissonance and Christian Origins" to be published in a forthcoming issue of Semeia, ed. John H. Elliott.

16. Raymond Brown, Community of the Beloved Disciple (New York: Paulist Press, 1979).

17. David Rhoads and Donald Michie, Mark as Story: An Introduction to the Narrative of a Gospel (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982).

18. Heinrich Lausberg, "Jesaja 55, 10-11 im Evangelium nach Johannes," Minuscula Philologica V., Nachrichten der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Goettingen, I., Philologisch-Historische Klasse, No. 7 (Goettingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1979).

19. See Steffen W. Schmidt, James C. Scott, Carl Lande and Laura Guasti, ed., Friends, Followers, and Factions: A Reader in Political Clientism (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977).

20. Mary Douglas, Cultural Bias, Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland Occasional Paper No. 35 (London, 1978).

21. These points were sent to me in comment on the paper by J. W. Pryor, of the Bible College of Victoria, who is writing a dissertation for the Macquarie University on the Johannine community.

22. For an overview, see David D. Gilmore, "Anthropology of the Mediterranean Area," Annual Review of Anthropology 11(1982):175-205.

23. Richard W. Coan, Hero, Artist, Sage, or Saint: A Survey of Views on What is Variouslly Called Mental Health, Normality, Maturity, Self-Actualization and Human Fulfillment (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977).

24. Points made by G. Theissen, Studien zur Soziologie des Urchristentums (1970), p. 6.

25. Karl Polanyi, Primitive, Archaic, and Modern Economics: Essays of Karl Polanyi, ed. George Dalton (Boston: Beacon Press, 1968).

26. Wilfred Cantwell Smith, The Meaning and End of Religion: A New Approach to the Religious Traditions of Mankind (New York: Mentor Books, 1964).
27. Reviewed annually along with papyri in G. H. R. Horsley, New Documents Illuminating Early Christianity (North Ryde, 1981+).
28. Jonathan Turner, The Structure of Sociological Theory, 3rd ed. (Homewood, Ill.: Dorsey, 1982).
29. On Michael Foucault's critique of Thomas S. Kuhn's natural science-inspired concept of "model" in the study of literature and of social practices, see H. L. Dreyfus and P. Rabinow, Michael Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), especially pp. 184-204 on "Power and Truth," and Foucault's "Afterword," pp. 208-226 on "The Subject of Power." See also the work of Charles Taylor, "Interpretation and the Science of Man," in Interpretive Social Science, ed. P. Rabinow and W. Sullivan (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979, reprint of 1971 essay), Richard Rorty, "Method, Social Science, and Social Hope," 1980 essay reprinted in Consequences of Pragmatism (University of Minnesota Press, 1982):191-210.
30. See note 13, above.
31. See Erdwin H. Pfuhl, Jr., The Deviance Process (New York: Van Nostrand, 1980).